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Cry, the beloved country

Cry, the beloved country
a VERSE drama

ADAPTED FROM ALAN PATON'S NOVEL BY

FELICIA KOMAI

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF
JOSEPHINE DOUGLAS

friendship press new york

This verse drama is based on the novel
Cry, the Beloved Country
by kind permission of
the author, Alan Paton

The novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*
is published in the United States of America
by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York
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This verse drama had its original production at the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, February, 1954, and was first published in Great Britain by Edinburgh House Press, London, 1954.

THE AUTHOR

Felicia Komai was born in London in 1926, daughter of Gonnoske Komai, Japanese poet and author, and an English mother. This adaptation of *Cry, the Beloved Country* is Miss Komai's first serious literary attempt.

She says she was compelled to write it by the urgent nature of Alan Paton's novel, by an overriding conviction that the subject was one which should be staged and its figures brought into relief against the back cloth of the church; in the earnest hope that its message would reach an even wider public and serve to remind each of his responsibility in one of the most vital problems of the world. Verse form seemed to her the most suitable method of preserving the natural poetry of the novel.

Where a fully cast production is not feasible, this verse drama can be presented effectively as a concert reading, utilizing a small cast, with each member portraying several parts.

Characters in order of appearance

WHITE MAN }
BLACK MAN } *Narrators*

THE REV. MR. MSIMANGU

MAFOLO

THE REV. STEPHEN KUMALO

GERTRUDE KUMALO

SMALL BLACK BOY

JOHN KUMALO

MRS. NDLELA

MRS. MKIZE

MRS. HLATSHWAYO

YOUNG WHITE MAN

THE GIRL

BLACK PRIEST

FATHER VINCENT

JAMES JARVIS

HARRISON

MARGARET JARVIS

ARTHUR JARVIS (*Voice*)

ABSALOM KUMALO

THE BISHOP

MRS. KUMALO

THOMAS

SMALL WHITE BOY

OTHER PARTS: 1st and 2nd Officials, Dhlamini, Hlabeni, White Priest, The Judge (*Voice*), White Warders, Three Children of Ndotsheni, Men and Women of Ndotsheni, Barbara Smith.

A brief list of names, with pronunciations, will be found on page 80.

ACT I

Appetale

PROLOGUE

The Prologue opens with the stage in darkness except for the two NARRATORS, the BLACK MAN and the WHITE MAN, to the extreme left and right front of stage respectively.

WHITE MAN: There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo
Into the hills . . .

These hills

Are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely
Beyond any singing of it.
The road climbs seven miles into them,
To Carisbrooke; and from there—if there is no mist—
You look down

On one of the fairest scenes of Africa . . .

Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu,
On its journey from the Drakensberg to the sea,
And beyond and behind the river,
Great hill after great hill;
And beyond and behind

Them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand . . .

The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil.

It holds the rain and the mist, and they seep
Into the ground, feeding the streams in every kloof. ^{an}
It is well tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it;
Not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil.

Stand unshod upon it: for the ground is holy,

Being even as it came

From the Creator.

Keep it—guard it—care for it—

For it keeps men, guards men, cares for men.

Destroy it—and man is destroyed.

BLACK MAN (*to the WHITE MAN*):

Where you stand

The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil.

But the rich green hills break down;

They fall

To the valley below,

And falling,

For they grow red and bare; they cannot hold
The rain and the mist, and the streams
Are dry in the kloofs.
Too many cattle feed upon the grass,
And too many fires have burned it.
Stand shod upon it, for it is coarse and sharp,
And the stones
Cut under the feet.
It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for;
It no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men.
The great red hills stand desolate, and the earth
Has torn away like flesh.
Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left,
And the maize hardly reaches the height of a man.
They are valleys of old men and old women,
Of mothers and children.
The men are away,
The young men and the girls are away.
The soil cannot keep them any more . . . (*Pause*)
All roads lead to Johannesburg.
If the crops fail, there is work in Johannesburg.
If the farm is too small to be divided further,
Some must go to Johannesburg . . .
WHITE MAN: And now, from the far valley of Ndotsheni,
An old priest journeys to Johannesburg.
Through the long night the train
Thunders towards Johannesburg,
The lights of the swaying coach
Fall on his anxious brow
And on the well-worn pages of his sacred book . . .
Happy the eyes that can close . . .

The Mission House, Sophiatown, Johannesburg

MSIMANGU is seated, reading a book. At the sound of a knock at the door he rises swiftly, closing the book and placing it on the small table by his chair. He goes to the door. Enter MAFOLO and KUMALO.

MAFOLO: Mr. Msimangu, I bring a friend to you:

The Reverend Kumalo from Ndotsheni.

MSIMANGU: Come in, come in, my friends.

Mr. Kumalo, I am glad to greet you.

Is this your first visit to Johannesburg?

(Kumalo appears dazed and incoherent.)

KUMALO: It is indeed . . .

I am much confused . . . I owe much to our friend . . .

(Indicating MAFOLO).

MSIMANGU: You fell into good hands.

MAFOLO: But not before he had been robbed.

MSIMANGU (looking from one to the other): Robbed?

MAFOLO: Yes. I was waiting in the bus station in the town,

When out of the crowd came the Reverend Kumalo,

To ask me where was the ticket office.

KUMALO: I had given a pound to a young man,

Who said he would get my ticket for me from the ticket office,

So that I would not lose my place in the line.

He spoke courteously, so I gave him the pound—

I did not like to ask how much it was.

He walked round the corner, and after a while

The line had moved so far forward

That soon I must enter a bus, and still I had no ticket.

So I left the line and asked your good friend here,

Who told me that you get your ticket on the bus,

There was no ticket office . . . *

MSIMANGU (laughing kindly):

You were unfortunate, my friend.

Such are the pitfalls of a great city.

KUMALO: I have been safely guided and warmly welcomed.

It is enough . . .

(MAFOLO moves to the door.)

MSIMANGU: Mr. Mafolo, will you not stay?

MAFOLO: You are kind, Mr. Msimangu, but I have much to do.

Stay well, my friend.

(To KUMALO) Stay well, umfundisi.

KUMALO: Go well.

MSIMANGU (*seeing him out*): Go well, my friend.

(To KUMALO): And we have much to talk about.

(*He indicates a chair and they sit down.*)

KUMALO: You will pardon me if I am hasty,

But I am anxious to hear about my sister.

MSIMANGU: Yes, I am sure you are.

But you will pardon me if I ask you first,

Why did your sister come to Johannesburg?

KUMALO (*obviously disturbed by the question*):

She came to look for her husband

Who was recruited for the mines.

But when his time was up, he did not return,

Nor did he write at all.

She did not know if he were dead, perhaps.

So she took her small child and went to look for him . . .

(*Anxiously*) Is she very sick?

MSIMANGU: Yes, she is very sick.

But it is not that kind of sickness.

I do not know if she ever found her husband,

But she has no husband now.

It would be truer to say that she has—many husbands.

KUMALO: *Tixo! Tixo!*

MSIMANGU: She lives in Claremont, not far from here.

It is one of the worst places in Johannesburg.

I shall hide nothing from you,

Though it is painful for me.

She will sleep with any man for her price.

A man has been killed at her place,

They gamble and drink and stab.

She has been in prison more than once.

(*He leans back in his chair and moves the book backwards and forwards on the table.*) This is terrible news for you.

(KUMALO *nods dumbly*. MSIMANGU *brings out his cigarettes*): Will you smoke?

KUMALO: I do not really smoke.

MSIMANGU: Sometimes it quietens one to smoke.

But there should be another kind of quiet in a man,
And then let him smoke to enjoy it.

But in Johannesburg it is hard sometimes
To find that kind of quiet.

KUMALO: In Johannesburg? Everywhere it is so:

The peace of God escapes us . .

Is the child there?

MSIMANGU: Yes. But it is no place for a child.

Perhaps if you cannot save the mother,
You can save him.

KUMALO: Where is this place?

MSIMANGU: It is not far from here.

They lie together: Sophiatown

And Claremont, the garbage-heap of the proud city.

I shall take you there tomorrow.

You will be shocked, my friend,

By its shabbiness and dirtiness,

The closeness of the houses and the filth in the streets;

By the women . . .

And the children, you will ask,

Why are they not at school?—

Some because they do not care, and some

Because their parents do not care.

But many because the schools are full.

We shall walk down Lily Street, and turn off

Into Hyacinth Street—

For the names there are very beautiful—

And at number eleven . . . Will you go in alone?

KUMALO: It would be better . . .

MSIMANGU: I have business next door, at number thirteen.

A woman of our church lives there . . .

KUMALO: I have another great sorrow . . .

MSIMANGU: You may tell me.

KUMALO: It is not easy . . .

It is our greatest sorrow . . .

MSIMANGU: A son, maybe? Or a daughter?

KUMALO: It is a son . . .

Absalom was his name.

He too went away, to look for my sister,
But he never returned.
Our letters—his mother's and mine—
All came back to us.
And now, after what you tell me,
I am still more afraid.

MSIMANGU: We shall try to find him, my brother.
Perhaps your sister will know.

You are tired, I must take you to your room.

KUMALO: It is my habit to pray in the church.
Maybe you will show me.

MSIMANGU: It is on the way.

My brother, I have of course my work to do,
But so long as you are here, my hands are yours.

KUMALO: You are kind.

MSIMANGU: I am not kind.

I am a selfish and sinful man,
But God put his hands on me, that is all.
(*He picks up KUMALO's bag.*)

KUMALO: I have a brother also, here in Johannesburg.
John Kumalo, a carpenter.

MSIMANGU: I know him. He is one of our great politicians.

KUMALO: A politician? My brother?

MSIMANGU: Yes, he is a great man in politics.

I am afraid your brother has no use for the church any
more.

He says that what God has not done for South Africa,
Man must do.

KUMALO: This is a bitter journey . . .

What will the Bishop say when he hears?
One of his priests . . .

MSIMANGU: What can a Bishop say?

Something is happening that no Bishop can stop.
Who can stop these things from happening?
They must go on.

KUMALO: How can you say so?

MSIMANGU: They must go on.

You cannot stop the world from going on.

My friend, I am a Christian.

It is not in my heart to hate a white man:

It was a white man who brought my father
 Out of darkness. But you will pardon me
 If I talk frankly to you. The tragedy
 Is not that things are broken. The tragedy is
 That they are not mended again.
 The white man has broken the tribe.
 And it is my belief that it cannot be mended again.
 But the house that is broken,
 And the man that falls apart when the house is broken—
 These are the tragic things.
 That is why children break the law,
 And old white people are robbed and beaten . . .
 It suited the white man to break the tribe.
 But it has not suited him
 To build something in the place of what is broken.
 They are not all so. There are some white men
 Who give their lives to build up what is broken.
 But they are not enough. They are afraid,
 That is the truth. It is fear
 That rules this land . . .
 These things are too many to talk about now.
 They are things to talk over quietly and patiently.
 You must get Father Vincent here
 To talk about them. He is a white man
 And can say what must be said.
 They give us too little. They give us
 Almost nothing . . .
 Come, let us go to the church.
 (*They go slowly towards the door as the lights fade.*)

ACT I]

SCENE 2

*A room in Hyacinth Street, Claremont, Johannesburg
 The next day.*

*The lights brighten on to a scene suggestive of the under-
 world, with GERTRUDE as the central figure. There is a
 knock at the door.*

GERTRUDE (*shouting abusively*): Who is there?
 (*She shrugs her shoulders at the silence, and goes towards
 the door.*)

Who is it?

KUMALO (*off-stage*): It is I, my sister.

(*She draws back, startled.*)

GERTRUDE: I am making ready, my brother.

(*She hastily dismisses some lounging natives out of the room, and voices and laughter quieten. She goes to the door to admit KUMALO.*)

KUMALO: I have come.

GERTRUDE: It is good.

KUMALO: You did not write.

GERTRUDE: No, I did not write.

KUMALO: Where is your husband?

GERTRUDE: I have not found him, my brother.

KUMALO: But you did not write.

Did you not know we were anxious?

GERTRUDE: I had no money to write.

KUMALO: Not two pennies for a stamp?

(*She is silent.*)

(*Angrily*) But you have money! I hear you are rich! ✓

GERTRUDE: I am not rich!

KUMALO: I hear you have been in prison!

GERTRUDE: That is true.

KUMALO: For what reason, my sister? ✓

GERTRUDE: I was not guilty. There was some other woman.

KUMALO: You stayed with this woman?

GERTRUDE: Yes.

KUMALO: Why did you stay with such a woman?

GERTRUDE: I had no other place.

KUMALO: And you helped her with her trade?

GERTRUDE: I had to have money for the child.

KUMALO: Where is the child?

(*She looks around vaguely.*)

Where is it?

GERTRUDE: It shall be fetched.

(*She goes from the room for a moment. Off-stage voices and laughter louden as she opens the door, and a fresh burst of laughter is heard as she returns.*)

KUMALO (*his anger rising*): Where can I stay here?

Where shall I sleep?

(*She looks at him with fear.*)

You have shamed us! A prostitute,
With a child, and you do not even know where it is!
How could you do this to us?
(She looks at him sullenly, like a tormented animal.)
I have come to take you back.
(She falls to the floor and cries; her cries become louder and louder.)
They will hear you!
Do you wish to come back?
(She nods.)

GERTRUDE: I am sick here. The child is sick also.

KUMALO: Do you wish with your heart to come back?
(She nods and sobs.)

GERTRUDE: I do not like Johannesburg.
But I am a bad woman, my brother,
I am no woman to go back.
(He lifts her from the floor to the chair.)

KUMALO: God forgives us. Who am I
Not to forgive? . . .

GERTRUDE: Here is the child, my brother.
(An older girl shepherds in the SMALL BLACK BOY and departs.)

KUMALO: It will be better for him in Ndotsheni.
(To the Boy.)

You are coming to a place where the wind blows cool,
And where there is a school for you . . .
My sister. . . Have you heard nothing of my child?

GERTRUDE: I did hear of him.
He was working at some big place in Johannesburg.
But where I am not sure.
The son of our brother John and your son
Were often together. He will know.

KUMALO: I shall go there . . .
And now, my sister, I must see
If there is a room for you where I am staying.
(He prepares to leave.)
I shall come back to fetch you later. ✓
You will be ready?

GERTRUDE: I will make ready, my brother.
(She escorts the BOY from the room, and KUMALO goes to-

wards the door. There is a knock, and JOHN KUMALO enters. He eyes KUMALO curiously.)

JOHN KUMALO: Good morning, sir.

KUMALO: Good morning, my brother.

JOHN KUMALO: I have come to see my sister, Gertrude Kumalo.

KUMALO: Good morning, my own brother,

Son of our mother.

(JOHN KUMALO looks at him closely, and smiles heartily.)

JOHN KUMALO: My own brother! Well, well, who can believe!

What are you doing in Johannesburg?

KUMALO: I come on business.

(Enter MSIMANGU.)

MSIMANGU: I have finished next door.

My time is yours, my friend.

KUMALO *(to JOHN)*: Do you know the Reverend Msimangu, my brother?

JOHN KUMALO: Everybody knows the Reverend Msimangu!

KUMALO: Is your wife Esther well, my brother?

JOHN KUMALO: My wife Esther has left me ten years, my brother.

KUMALO: And have you married again?

JOHN KUMALO: Well, well, not what the Church
Calls married, you know.

KUMALO: You wrote nothing of this, brother.

JOHN: No, how could I write? You people in Ndotsheni
Do not understand the way life is
In Johannesburg. I thought it better
Not to write.

KUMALO: But I do not understand.

How is life different in Johannesburg?

JOHN: Well, that is difficult . . .

You see, something new is happening here.

Down in Ndotsheni I am nobody,

Even as you are nobody, my brother.

I am subject to the chief;

I must salute him and bow to him;

But he is an ignorant man.

Here in Johannesburg I am a man of some importance.

I have my own business, and when it is good,

I can make ten, twelve pounds a week.

I do not say we are free here as men should be.
 But at least I am free of an old, ignorant man,
 Who is nothing but a white man's dog,
 A trick to hold together
 Something that the white man desires to hold together.
 But it is breaking apart, your tribal society.
 It is here in Johannesburg
 That the new society is being built . . .
 I do not wish to offend you gentlemen,
 But the Church too is like the chief:
 You must do so and so and so.
 A man must be faithful and meek and obedient,
 And he must obey the laws, whatever the laws may be.
 It is true that the Church speaks with a fine voice,
 And against the laws.
 But things get worse, not better . . .
 Here in Johannesburg it is the mines—
 Everything is the mines.
 This wonderful City Hall, this beautiful Parktown
 With its beautiful houses—all this is built
 With the gold from the mines.
 This wonderful hospital for Europeans,
 The biggest hospital south of the Equator,
 It is built with the gold from the mines . . .
 Go to *our* hospital,
 And see our people lying on the floors.
 They lie so close you cannot step over them.
 But it is *they* who dig the gold.
 For *three shillings a day*.
 We come from the Transkei, and from Basutoland,
 From Bechuanaland, Swaziland, Zululand.
 And from Ndotsheni also.
 We live in the compounds,
 We must leave our wives and families behind.
 And when new gold is found,
 It is the *white* man's shares that will rise.
 They bring more of us to live in the compounds,
 To dig under the ground for three shillings a day.
 They do not think, Here is a chance to pay more
 for our labour.

They think, Here is a chance
 To build a bigger house and buy a bigger car.
 It is important to find gold, they say,
 For all South Africa is built on the mines.
 But it is not built on the mines: it is built
 On our backs, on our sweat, on our labour.
 And what does a chief know about that?
 The Bishop says it is wrong, but he lives
 In a big house, and his white priests
 Get four, five, six times what you get, my brother . . .
 That is why I no longer go to the Church.
 KUMALO: And that is why you did not write any more?
 JOHN: Yes, yes, perhaps. It is hard to explain
 In a letter. Our customs are different here.
 MSIMANGU: Are there any customs here?
 JOHN: There is a new thing growing here. Stronger
 Than any church or chief.
 You will see it one day . . .
 KUMALO: My brother, I have something to ask of you.
 But first I will tell you
 That Gertrude is coming back to Ndotsheni.
 JOHN: Well, well . . . I shall not say it is a bad thing.
 I myself have tried to persuade her,
 But she did not agree.
 KUMALO: And now I must ask you: Where is my son?
 JOHN (*uncomfortably*): Well, you have heard no doubt
 He was friendly with my son.
 KUMALO: I have heard that.
 JOHN: Well, you know how these young men are.
 I do not blame them altogether. You see,
 My son did not agree well with his second mother,
 So he said he would leave.
 He had good work, so I did not stop him.
 And your son went with him.
 KUMALO: Where, my brother?
 JOHN: I do not really know. But I heard
 That they had a room in Alexandra.
 Now wait a minute. They were both working.
 For a factory. I remember . . .
 Doornfontein Textiles Company.

I shall write it down for you, my brother.

KUMALO: Can we not telephone them?

JOHN (*laughing*): What for? To ask if Absalom Kumalo

Is working there? Or to ask

If they will call him to the telephone?

They do not do such things for a black man, my brother!

(*Breaking into fresh laughter, he goes in search of*

GERTRUDE.)

Gertrude! Where are you, my sister?

(*As he goes out, there is a burst of voices and laughter from the next room.*)

WOMAN'S VOICE (*off-stage, in mocking tones*):

And your brother a priest!

(*The voice is lost in more laughter, which ceases abruptly as JOHN KUMALO closes the door behind him.*)

MSIMANGU: It does not matter, my friend.

My hands are yours . . .

KUMALO: Huh, there you have it.

MSIMANGU: Yes, we have it there . . .

He is a big man in this place, your brother.

They say you must hear him at a meeting,

He could make men mad if he would.

But for that, they say, he has not enough courage,

For he would surely be sent to prison . . .

Though much that he said is true.

Because the white man has power, we too

Want power. But when a black man gets power,

He is a great man if he is not corrupted.

I have seen it often. He seeks power and money

To put right what is wrong, but when he gets them,

Why, now he can gratify his lusts,

Now he can speak to thousands

And hear them clap their hands.

Some of us think when we have power,

We shall revenge ourselves on the white man;

And because our desire is corrupt,

We are corrupted, and the power has no heart in it.

But most white men do not know this truth about power,

And they are afraid lest we get it . . .

But there is only one thing that has power completely,

And that is love. Because when a man loves,
He seeks no power, and therefore he has power.
I see only one hope for our country, and that is
When white men and black men,
Desiring nothing but the good of their country,
Come together to work for it . . .
I have one great fear in my heart: that one day
When they are turned to loving, they will find we
Are turned to hating . . .
This is not the way to get to Doornfontein.
Come, let us hurry . . .
(KUMALO follows him out heavily.)

SCENE 3

[ACT I

*The Mission House, Sophiatown.
Evening, a few days later.*

KUMALO is *seated*, reading from his sacred book, but he finds concentration impossible and his eyes wander restlessly around. He rests his head in his hand and covers his eyes. One arm is outstretched lifelessly along the arm of his chair, and the sacred book falls to the floor as the stage darkens. Faces and shapes are now shown dimly. The figures of KUMALO and MSIMANGU stand mostly in darkness, the faint light falling on the faces of those who are being questioned in the search. First, a WHITE OFFICIAL, business-like but helpful, looks through a record book.

1ST OFFICIAL: Kumalo, you say. First name Absalom.
No sign here.

I think you must be mistaken, umfundisi.

I will ask my colleague, he will know more, perhaps.

(A second WHITE OFFICIAL joins them.)

2ND OFFICIAL: Name Kumalo? Christian name Absalom?

Yes, I remember. He left; he must have been gone

Twelve months at least. . . . You won't find him there.

I remember, though, he was friendly with one of the men
Who is still here—Dhlamini. Send for Dhlamini!

MAN'S VOICE: Dhlamini! (*distant*): Dhlamini!

(DHLAMINI appears, wiping the sweat from his brow, and out of breath.)

1ST OFFICIAL: Dhlamini, maybe you can tell us.

Absalom Kumalo . . . Do you know where he is?
His father is seeking him.

DHLAMINI: Absalom Kumalo. Yes, sir, I knew him.

Last I heard he was staying with a Mrs. Ndlela,
Of End Street, Sophiatown. I am not sure,
But the number of the house I think was 105.

(The faces disappear in the darkness. The face of a kind-looking woman, MRS. NDLELA, appears. She looks at KUMALO curiously and with pity.)

MRS. NDLELA: Absalom Kumalo. Yes, he was here.

A letter came from him, asking about some things
He had left behind. I will find it for you
And give you the address . . .

(Quietly to MSIMANGU): I did not like his friends . . .

(KUMALO turns, and the light falls for a moment on his unhappy face. He and MSIMANGU walk a pace or two before the hostile face of another woman is seen.)

MSIMANGU: You say the boy has gone, Mrs. Mkize?
When did he go?

MRS. MKIZE: These many months. A year it must be.

MSIMANGU: And he had a friend?

MRS. MKIZE: Yes, another Kumalo.

But they left together.

MSIMANGU: And you do not know where they went?

MRS. MKIZE: They talked of many places.

But you know how these young men talk.

KUMALO: How did he behave himself,

This young man Absalom?

MRS. MKIZE *(with fear in her eyes)*:

I saw nothing wrong.

KUMALO: But you guessed there was something wrong.

MRS. MKIZE: There was nothing wrong.

KUMALO: Then why are you afraid?

MRS. MKIZE: I am not afraid.

MSIMANGU: Then why do you tremble? —

MRS. MKIZE: I am cold. — — —

(KUMALO turns away.)

They were friendly with the taxi-driver
Hlabeni. Near the bus rank,

Everyone knows him.

(She disappears, and the face of the taxi-driver HLABENI comes into view.)

HLABENI: Absalom Kumalo? Yes, I knew this young man.
I heard he was gone to Orlando, and lives there
Amongst the squatters in Shanty Town.
But further than that I do not know.

MSIMANGU: Orlando is a big place.

HLABENI: Where the squatters live is not so big.

It should not be hard to find him, umfundisi.

(He fades. The face of a clean, nice-looking woman appears.)

MRS. HLATSHWAYO: Yes, he stayed with me, umfundisi.
We took pity on him because he had no place to go.
But I am sorry to tell you that they took him away,
And I heard that the magistrate had sent him
To the reformatory.

MSIMANGU: The reformatory? ✓

MRS. HLATSHWAYO: Yes, the big school over there, beyond
The soldiers' hospital. It is not too far
To walk.

MSIMANGU: I must thank you, mother . . . ✓

(She fades. The face of the YOUNG WHITE MAN appears.)

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Yes, I know him well. Strange,
He told me he had no people.

KUMALO: He was no doubt ashamed . . .

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Your son did well here. He became
One of our senior boys, and I have great hope
For his future.

KUMALO: You mean, sir, that he is gone?

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Gone, yes, only one month ago.

We made an exception in his case,
Partly because of his good behaviour,
But mainly because there was a girl who was pregnant
by him.

She came here to see him, and he seemed fond of her,
And anxious about the child that would be born. So,
With all these things in mind,
And with his solemn undertaking
He would work for his child and its mother.

We asked the Minister to let him go.
Of course we do not succeed in all these cases,
But where there seems to be real affection
Between the parties, we take the chance;
For one thing is certain: that if it fails,
There is nothing that could have succeeded.

KUMALO: And he is now married, sir?

YOUNG WHITE MAN: No, umfundisi, he is not.
But everything is arranged for the marriage.
This girl has no people, and your son
Told us he had no people, so I myself
And my native assistant have arranged it.

KUMALO: That is good of you, sir. I thank you for them.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: It is our work. You must not worry ~~too~~
much

About this matter, and the fact
That they were not married. The real question
Is whether he will care for them,
And lead a decent life.

KUMALO: That I can see, although it is a shock to me.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: I understand that . . .

Now I will take you to Pimville,
Where Absalom and this girl are living.
He will not be there,
Because I have found work for him in the town.

KUMALO: Indeed I cannot thank you, sir ✓

*(The YOUNG WHITE MAN joins KUMALO and MSIMANGU,
and they come face to face with THE GIRL.)*

THE GIRL *(to the YOUNG WHITE MAN)*:

He went on Saturday to Springs.
He has not yet returned. ✓

YOUNG WHITE MAN: But this is Tuesday. Have you heard
Nothing from him?

THE GIRL: Nothing. •

YOUNG WHITE MAN: When will he return?

THE GIRL: I do not know.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Will he ever return?

THE GIRL: I do not know.

KUMALO *(with compassion)*: What will you do?

THE GIRL: • • • I do not know.

MSIMANGU (*bitterly*): Perhaps you will find another man.

(KUMALO glances at him quickly, then at THE GIRL.)

THE GIRL: I do not know.

(KUMALO moves quickly to speak, but MSIMANGU turns his back on THE GIRL, and speaks privately to KUMALO.)

MSIMANGU: You can do nothing here. Let us go.

KUMALO: My friend . . .

MSIMANGU: I tell you, you can do nothing!

Have you not troubles enough of your own?

I tell you there are thousands such in Johannesburg,

And were your back as broad as heaven

And your purse full of gold,

And did your compassion reach

From here to hell itself,

There is nothing you can do.

(*They walk away, heavy with failure.*)

KUMALO: You do not understand: the child

Will be my grandchild.

MSIMANGU (*angrily*): Even that you do not know!

And if he were, how many such more have you?

Shall we search them out, day after day.

Hour after hour? Will it ever end?

(KUMALO stands as though he has been struck. The stage darkens completely, then brightens to show him standing, grasping the edges of the small table by MSIMANGU's chair, leaning heavily for support. MSIMANGU enters and stops short when he sees KUMALO's distress. He sees the sacred book on the floor, retrieves it quietly, and reaching from behind KUMALO, places it on the table.)

MSIMANGU: I am ashamed to sit with you.

I ask your forgiveness for my ugly words . . .

Sometimes I think I am not fit

To be a priest. I could tell you . . .

KUMALO: It is no matter. You have said

You are a weak and selfish man, but God

Put his hands upon you. It seems it is so.

MSIMANGU: Huh, you comfort me . . .

The young white man has telephoned the factory.

It is true: He has not been at work this week . . .

Let us not give up all hope, he said.

It happens sometimes that a boy is arrested,
Or is injured and taken to hospital,
And we do not know. Tell the umfundisi,
I am sorry for this, but I
Will not give up the search.

KUMALO: He is a good man . . .

MSIMANGU: It is his work, he says . . .

(They sit down.)

I have been thinking that it is time for you
To rest awhile.

KUMALO: . . . How can I rest?

MSIMANGU: I know what you mean.

But the young man at the reformatory
Will do better at this searching
Than you or I could do.

Now tomorrow I must go to Ezenzeleni,
Which is the place of our blind,
To hold a service for them.

You may come with me; and while I work
You can rest. They have a chapel there,
And the ground falls away from one's feet
To the valley below; the wide plain beneath
Stretches away to blue and distant mountains . . .

It is a wonderful place, this Ezenzeleni:
For the blind, that dragged out their days
In a world they could not see.

There they have eyes given to them. There
The seeing hands make things that we
For all our sight could never make.

If you talk with these people, the blind eyes glow
With something that can only be fire in the soul.

It is white men who do this work of mercy.

It will lift your spirits to see how they come together
To open the eyes of black men that are blind.

Then we can return strengthened
For what is still before us.

KUMALO: You are indeed kind . . .

(Enter FATHER VINCENT and a BLACK PRIEST.)

BLACK PRIEST: Tell me, my friend, you are from Ixopo,
Did you not say?—I am also from there.

My father and mother are still alive
In the valley of the Lufafa. How is it there?

KUMALO (*shaking his head*):

The land is sick; the grass has disappeared.
The maize barely grows to the height of a man.
The men, the young men and the girls go away.
It is a land of old men and old women,
Of mothers and children . . .
Yet even so, here in this city
I cannot forget the valley where I was born;
The great hills and rivers
Of the Lufafa, and the Inhlavini,
The Umkomaas, and the Umzimkulu.
And here the thought of many a friend,
And my wife. . . . These are so dear to me, these
I can contemplate in quiet,
And in some measure of peace . . .

FATHER VINCENT: Who indeed knows the secret of the earthly
pilgrimage?

Who indeed knows why there can be comfort
In a world of desolation?

MSIMANGU: Now God be thanked that there is a beloved one
Who can lift up the heart in suffering . . .

BLACK PRIEST: Now God be thanked that the name of a hill
Is such music, that the name of a river
Can heal . . .

KUMALO (*to himself*): Aye,

Even the name of a river that runs no more . . .

(*Another WHITE PRIEST enters with a newspaper. His face
is set and concerned.*)

WHITE PRIEST: 'Murder in Parkwold.

Well-known city engineer shot dead.'

(*He hands the paper to FATHER VINCENT.*)

FATHER VINCENT (*with trepidation*):

'Assailants thought to be natives.'

WHITE PRIEST: This is a terrible loss for South Africa.

For this Arthur Jarvis was a courageous young man,
And a great fighter for justice.

MSIMANGU: Jarvis? It is indeed a terrible thing . . .

He was President of the African Boys' Club,
Here in Claremont.

FATHER VINCENT (*to KUMALO*): Perhaps you might have known him.

It says that he was the only child
Of Mr. James Jarvis, of High Place, Carisbrooke.

KUMALO: I know the father. I mean I know him well

By sight and name, but we have never spoken.

His farm is in the hills above Ndotsheni,

And he sometimes rode past our church.

But I did not know the son . . .

Yet I remember. . . . There was a small bright boy,

And he too sometimes rode on his horse past the church . . .

A small bright boy . . .

FATHER VINCENT (*reading*): 'At 1:30 p.m. today Mr. Arthur Jarvis was shot dead in his house by an intruder, thought to be a native. It would seem that, probably with two accomplices, he entered by the kitchen, thinking perhaps that there would be no one in the house. The native servant in the kitchen was knocked unconscious, and it would appear that Mr. Jarvis heard the disturbance and came down to investigate. He was shot dead at short range in the passageway. There were no signs of any struggle.'

WHITE PRIEST (*reading over FATHER VINCENT's shoulder*):

'Three native youths were seen lounging in Plantation Road shortly before the tragedy occurred, and a strong force of detectives was immediately sent to the scene. The native servant is lying unconscious in the Non-European Hospital, and it is hoped that when he regains consciousness he will be able to furnish the Police with important information. His condition is serious, however . . . '

FATHER VINCENT: 'Mr. Jarvis leaves a widow, Mary Jarvis, a nine-year-old son, and a five-year-old daughter. The dead man was well known for his efforts for the welfare of the non-European sections of the community.'

(The stage dims slightly. The NARRATORS have taken up their places on the left and right. During the following passages, three more PRIESTS enter, one by one (two black, one white). One brings another newspaper; the others in-

dicate that they have already heard the news. The faint beating of a drum is heard, with the distant tolling of a bell.)

WHITE MAN: Sadness and fear and hate,
How they well up in the heart and mind,
Whenever one opens the pages
Of these messengers of doom.

BLACK MAN: Cry for the broken tribe,
For the law and custom that is gone.

WHITE MAN: Aye, and cry aloud for the man who is dead,
For the woman and children bereaved.

BLACK MAN: Cry, the beloved country,
These things are not yet at an end.
The sun pours down on the earth,
On the lovely land that man cannot enjoy.
He knows only the fear of his heart.
(KUMALO rises heavily.)

KUMALO: I shall go to my room . . .
(He comes slowly forward to the left front of the stage and removes his hat and coat from a stand. MSIMANGU helps him on with them while they talk.)
This thing . . . This thing . . . Here in my heart
There is nothing but fear.
Fear—fear—fear.

MSIMANGU: I understand.
Yet it is nevertheless foolish
To fear that one thing in this great city
With its thousands and thousands of people.

KUMALO: It is not a question of wisdom and foolishness.
It is just fear.

MSIMANGU: Tomorrow we go to Ezenzeleni.
Perhaps you will find peace there . . .
Come and pray.

KUMALO: There is no prayer left in me.
I am dumb—here inside.
(He moves slowly to the door with MSIMANGU.)
(To the PRIESTS): Good night to you all.

PRIESTS *(severally)*: Good night. Good night, brother.

MSIMANGU *(to KUMALO)*: Good night, my brother.

KUMALO: Good night. (Exit.)

(MSIMANGU turns back into the room, paces restlessly around. One by one the PRIESTS rise, nod their good nights, and exeunt to the left, to the following passages. The stage dims still further.)

WHITE MAN: Have no doubt it is fear in the land.

For what can men do when so many have grown lawless?

Who can enjoy the lovely land,

Who can enjoy the seventy years, and the sun

That pours down on the earth,

When there is fear in the heart?

Who can walk quietly in the shadow of the jacarandas,

When their beauty is grown to danger?

Who can lie peacefully abed, while the darkness

Holds some secret? What lovers

Can lie sweetly under the stars, when menace grows

With the measure of their seclusion?

There are voices crying what must be done,

A hundred, a thousand voices.

But what do they help if one seeks for counsel,

For one cries this, and one cries that,

And another cries something

That is neither this nor that.

Yes, there are a hundred, and a thousand voices crying . . .

(Towards the end there is an urgent knocking at the door.

All the PRIESTS have gone except FATHER VINCENT and

MSIMANGU. MSIMANGU goes to the door. The bell ceases to

toll, but the drum takes on a more urgent note. The voice of

MRS. NDLELA is heard, breathless and frightened.)

MRS. NDLELA: Mr. Msimangu . . .

MSIMANGU: Ah, it is Mrs. Ndlela . . .

MRS. NDLELA: Mr. Msimangu: the police have been to me.

They want to know about the son of the old umfundisi.

They are looking for him.

MSIMANGU: For what, mother?

MRS. NDLELA: They did not say, Mr. Msimangu.

MSIMANGU: And then, mother?

MRS. NDLELA: I was frightened, umfundisi.

So I gave them the address of Mrs. Mkize.

And one said yes, this woman was known to them.

MSIMANGU: You gave them the address?

MRS. NDLELA: Did I do wrong, umfundisi?

MSIMANGU: You did no wrong, mother.

MRS. NDLELA: I was afraid.

MSIMANGU: It is the law, mother.

We must uphold the law.

MRS. NDLELA: I am glad, umfundisi.

MSIMANGU: I thank you, mother. Go well.

MRS. NDLELA: Stay well, umfundisi.

(MSIMANGU turns slowly back into the room. FATHER VINCENT goes out. MSIMANGU catches sight of the sacred book which KUMALO has left on the little table, and he kneels there. The lights fade with the following passage.)

BLACK`MAN: Cry, the beloved country,

For the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear.

Let him not love the earth too deeply.

Let him not laugh too gladly when the water

Runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent

When the setting sun makes red the veld with fire.

Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are
singing,

Nor give too much of his heart

To a mountain or a valley.

For fear will rob him of all

If he gives too much.

ACT II

PROLOGUE

The Prologue opens as in Act I, with the NARRATORS in their respective places.

BLACK MAN: There is a lovely road that runs
From Ixopo into the hills.
These hills are grass-covered and rolling,
And lovely beyond all singing of it. The road climbs
Seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke,
From where, if there is no mist,
You look down on one of the fairest scenes of Africa.
Up on the tops is a small and lovely valley,
Between two hills that shelter it.
There is a house there, and flat ploughed fields—
One of the finest farms of this countryside.
It is called High Place, the farm and dwelling
Of James Jarvis, Esquire, and it stands
High above Ndotsheni, and the great valley
Of the Umzimkulu.

WHITE MAN: Out of a cloudless sky
The hot afternoon sun of October
Pours down on the fields. Under the plough
The clods turn up hard and unbroken,
And here and there it rides
Uselessly over the iron soil.
Call your dog, Mr. Jarvis,
And set out on the kaffir path that leads up to the tops.
There is no sign of drought there,
For the grass is fed by the mists, and the breeze
Blows coolingly on the sweating face.
Look around now on the green rich hills
Inherited from your father, and down on the rich valley
Where you live and farm. It was your wish
That your son, the only child born to you,
Would have chosen this life, but when he chose otherwise,
You held that his life was his own
And that no other man had a right

To put hands on it . . .

Along the lovely road

That runs into the hills, a car flashes in the sun.

Shade your eyes to discern the police-car from Ixopo,
Out on patrol no doubt.

Up to the tops it comes, to the small and lovely valley,
To the house itself. Your wife is there,
But it seems that they come to see you,
And one is the captain himself . . .

Call your dog, Mr. Jarvis, prepare to go down.
Set out along the path that drops down steeply
Amongst the stones. The police climb the slope
To meet you. The captain comes on . . .

Well, captain, have you brought us some rain? (*Pause.*)
Out of a cloudless sky, these things come.

Shot dead, you say, at 1.30 p.m. today
In Johannesburg. Two hours ago. Three hours ago, alive...
Shot dead, you say . . . Did they catch the native?
What does that matter? . . . Through the misted eyes
The plough turns over the clods, then rides high
Over the iron ground. Leave it, Thomas . . .
Captain . . . he was our only child . . .

BLACK MAN: All roads lead to Johannesburg. —

If you are white or if you are black,
They lead to Johannesburg.

Out of the midnight sky
The roar of an aeroplane
Speeds in the traveller to the slumbering city.

SCENE I

[ACT II

*The Study of Harrison's House, Johannesburg.
The same night.*

A medium-sized round table is laden with letters and telegrams, and a few papers. There are two chairs, a stool, and a small table holding a tray with whisky and glasses. JAMES JARVIS and HARRISON enter gravely.

JARVIS: How is Mary?

HARRISON: She's suffering from the shock, Jarvis.
But she's very brave.

JARVIS: And the children?

HARRISON: They've taken it very badly.

And that has given Mary something to occupy herself.

Would you like a drink?

JARVIS: It would be welcome.

HARRISON (*pouring out two drinks*): Sit down, Jarvis.

If there's anything we can do, you've only to ask.

The police would like to see you.

But they won't worry you tonight.

JARVIS: You know, my wife and I have hardly spoken of it yet.

HARRISON: It's always worse for the mother, Jarvis.

JARVIS: Yes . . .

HARRISON: The police seem to think that there were three of them.

They're waiting for the house-boy to recover consciousness.

They have hopes that he recognised one of them.

Otherwise they say it will be very difficult:

The whole thing was over so quickly.

I hope to God they get them. And string 'em all up.

We're not safe, Jarvis. I don't even know

That stringing 'em up will make us safe.

Sometimes I think it's got beyond us.

JARVIS: I know what you mean. But myself—

Perhaps it's too soon to think about it.

HARRISON: I understand. I might be the same,

I don't really know . . .

A strange thing,

It appears that Arthur was writing a paper just before he died,

On "The Truth About Native Crime."

We've got it for you, Jarvis,

It's there on the table.

JARVIS: My son and I didn't see eye to eye on the native question, Harrison.

In fact, he and I got quite heated about it

On more than one occasion.

But I'd like to see what he wrote.

HARRISON: I can't say that my son and I agree on it either.

Another drink, Jarvis?

JARVIS: . . . Thank you.

HARRISON: By the way, we've arranged the funeral
For tomorrow afternoon, in Parkwold Church.

JARVIS: Thank you, Harrison.

HARRISON: This business has shocked the people of Parkwold
profoundly.

We've kept all the messages that have poured into the
house—

From the Bishop, and the Mayor,
And from dozens of others,
And from native organisations too.
And from coloured people,
And Indians and Jews.

JARVIS: He was clever. That came from his mother.

HARRISON: He was that right enough. You must hear John
on it.

But people like him too, all sorts of people . . .
You know he spoke Afrikaans like an Afrikaner?

JARVIS: I knew he had learnt it.

HARRISON: It's a lingo I know nothing about, thank God.

But he thought he ought to know it.

He spoke Zulu, as you know, but he was thinking
Of learning Sesuto! You know these native M.P.s they
have—

Well, there was talk of getting him to stand
At the next election.

JARVIS: I didn't know that.

HARRISON: Oh yes, he was always speaking here and there.

You know the kind of thing:

Native crime, and more native schools . . .

And he kicked up a hell of a dust in the papers

About the conditions at the Non-European Hospital.

And you know he was hot about the native compound
system

In the mines, and wanted wife and family
To come with the man.

(JARVIS takes out his pipe, and begins to fill it slowly.)

His firm did a lot of business with the mines,

So I warned him to go slow a bit,

Told him there was Mary to consider, and the children.

I've spoken to Mary, he said. She and I agree

That it's more important to speak the truth than to make money.

I've spoken to my partners too, he said,
And told them, if there's any trouble I'll get out.
And what would you do? I asked him.
What won't I do? he said.

My son John was there, looking at him
As though he were God Almighty . . .
So what could I say?

(He laughs, then cuts himself short.)

That's how he was . . .

He and I didn't talk much about these things,
It's not my line of country.

I try to treat a native decently,
But he's not my food and drink.

And to tell you the truth, these crimes put me off.

I tell you, Jarvis,

We're scared stiff at the moment in Johannesburg.

We don't go to bed at night without barricading the house.

I asked Arthur about it, but he reckoned we

Were to blame somehow. Can't say

I always followed him, but he had a kind of sincerity.

You sort of felt that if you had the time

You could get some sort of sense out of it.

(JARVIS rises restlessly.)

JARVIS: There's one thing I don't get the sense of.

Why this should have happened . . .

HARRISON: You mean, to him, of all people?

JARVIS: Yes.

HARRISON: That's one of the first things we said,

There he was, day in and day out,

On a kind of mission. And it was he
who was killed.

JARVIS: Mind you . . .

Mind you, it's happened before.

I mean, that missionaries were killed . . .

Did you say the police were coming?

HARRISON: They're coming at nine tomorrow.

JARVIS: And I'd like to go to Parkwood.

HARRISON: To see the house? They'll take you there.

And by the way, a message came for Margaret
From a niece of hers at Springs.
She wants you both to spend a day with her
While you are here.

JARVIS: Thank you, Harrison.

Will you say good night to your wife for me?

HARRISON: I'll do that. (*They move to go. JARVIS lingers
by the table, looking at the pile of messages.*)

Perhaps you'd like to look through those
Before you go.

JARVIS: Many thanks, Harrison, for all your kindnesses.

HARRISON: No thanks are needed. Good night, Jarvis,
I hope you and Margaret will get some sleep. (*Exit.*)

JARVIS: A missionary . . . I called him a missionary . . .

Strange . . . My son a missionary . . .

I have never thought much about missionaries,

Nor much of them, for that matter . . .

One gives to these special appeals and so forth,

But one does that kind of thing

Without believing much in missionaries . . .

There's a mission near us at Ndotsheni,

But it's a sad place, as I remember it . . .

A dirty old wood-and-iron church, patched and forlorn . . .

And a dirty old parson, in a barren valley

Where the grass hardly grows . . .

And a dirty old school where I've heard them reciting,

Parrot-fashion, on the one or two occasions

That I've ridden past—

Reciting things that could mean little to them.

(*He does not see MARGARET enter.*)

MARGARET: James.

JARVIS (*startled*): My dear . . .

MARGARET: I thought you would never come.

What were you thinking, my dear?

JARVIS: Of it all . . .

We were talking of the boy.

All that he did, and tried to do.

MARGARET: It makes me proud . . .

JARVIS: This boy of ours went journeying in strange waters,
Further than we knew . . .

Or perhaps *you* knew . . .

MARGARET: Yes, I knew.

JARVIS: I knew too that he was a decent man.

But you were always nearer to him than I was.

MARGARET: It's easier for a mother, James.

JARVIS: I wish now that I'd known more of him.

The things that he did,

Well, I've never had much to do with that sort of thing.

MARGARET: Nor I either, James.

His life was quite different from ours.

JARVIS: It was a good life, by all accounts . . .

And you understood it.

MARGARET: Yes, James.

JARVIS: I didn't know it would ever be so important

To understand it . . .

MARGARET: My dear . . .

JARVIS: There's one thing I don't understand:

Why it should have happened to him . . .

(They stand a moment, then he guides her to the table, his hands around her shoulders.)

Look at these . . . From all the people who are grieved . . .

(She begins to look through them. JARVIS stands looking over her shoulder, then his eyes fall on a paper which he picks out. He takes it slowly to his chair, reading as he goes. The light dims slightly.)

Voice of ARTHUR JARVIS: 'It is hard to be born a South African.

One can be born an Afrikaner, or an English-speaking South African,

Or a coloured man, or a Zulu.

One can see, as I saw when I was a boy,

The reserves of the Bantu people,

And see nothing of what was happening there at all.

One can read, as I read when I was a boy,

Of the land of sun and beauty

Sheltered from the storms of the world,

And feel pride in it and love for it.

But it is only as one grows up that one learns

That there are other things here than sun

And gold, and oranges. It is only then

That one learns of the hates and fears of our country.

It is only then that one's love grows deep and passionate...
I was born on a farm, brought up by honorable parents.
From them I learned all that a child should learn
Of honour and charity and generosity.
But of South Africa I learned nothing at all . . . '

(JARVIS *shuts his eyes, puts the paper down almost angrily.*)

MARGARET: What is it, James? What are you reading?

JARVIS: What Arthur was writing before he died.

(*He picks up the paper again. MARGARET sits on the arm of his chair, and he points on the page.*)

MARGARET: 'I was brought up as a Christian, but the truth is . . . '

(*The lights fade, leaving them in a spotlight.*)

Voice of ARTHUR JARVIS (*dimly seen now seated opposite them*): ' . . . the truth is that our Christian civilisation

Is riddled through and through with dilemma.

We believe in the brotherhood of man,

But we in South Africa do not want it.

We believe in help for the underdog,

But we want him to stay under.

(JARVIS *slowly raises his eyes to the dim figure sitting in the chair opposite him.*)

And we are therefore compelled,

In order to preserve our belief that we are Christian,

To ascribe to Almighty God our own human intentions,

And to say that because He created white and black,

He gives the Divine Approval to any human action

That is designed to keep black men from advancement.

We go so far as to credit Him

With having created black men

To hew wood and draw water for white men . . .

(*The figure rises slowly.*)

The truth is that our civilisation is *not* Christian;

It is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice,

Of high assurance and desperate anxiety,

Of loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions . . .

(JARVIS *watches the figure pace to and fro before him.*)

Therefore I shall devote myself unceasingly

To the service of South Africa.

I shall no longer ask myself if this or that is expedient,

But only if it is right. I shall do this,
 Not because I am noble or unselfish,
 But because I need for the rest of my journey
 A star that will not play false to me,
 A compass that will not lie.
 I am lost when I balance this against that,
 I am lost when I ask if it is safe;
 I am lost when I ask if white men or black,
 Gentiles or Jews, will approve.
 I only know that I am no longer able
 To aspire to the highest with one part of myself,
 And to deny it with another.
 I would rather die than live like that.
(The figure disappears. The lights begin to brighten.)
 I understand better
 Those who have died for their convictions,
 And have not thought it wonderful
 Or brave or noble to die.
 They died rather than live, that was all.
 Allow me a minute . . . '

JARVIS: 'Allow me a minute . . . '

Allow me a minute, I hear a sound in the kitchen . . .

Allow me a minute, while I go to my death . . .

Allow me a *thousand* minutes . . . I am not coming back
 any more . . . *(He gropes for the comfort of*

MARGARET'S *outstretched hand as the lights fade.)*

ACT II]

SCENE 2

The Mission House, Sophiatown, Johannesburg.

A few days later.

Enter KUMALO, JOHN KUMALO and the YOUNG WHITE MAN.

JOHN: Well, well . . . We must go at once
 And see a lawyer.

KUMALO: A lawyer, my brother?

For what should we spend such money?

The story is plain, there can be no doubt about it.

JOHN: What is the story?

KUMALO: . . . These three lads

Went to a house that they thought was empty.
They struck down the servant.
The white man heard the noise and he came to see.
And then . . . *my* son, not yours . . . shot at him . . .
He was afraid, he says . . .

JOHN: Well, well . . . that is a story . . .

And he told you this in front of the others?

KUMALO: Why not, if it is the truth?

JOHN: Perhaps you do not need a lawyer.

If *he* shot the white man, there is perhaps
Nothing more to be said.

KUMALO: Will *you* have a lawyer then?

JOHN (*smiling*): Perhaps *I* shall need a lawyer. For one thing,
A lawyer can talk to my son in private.
You see, my brother, there is *no proof*
That my son and this other young man
Were there at all.

KUMALO: Not there at all? But my son said they were . . .

JOHN: Yes, yes! . . . And when they deny it,
Who will believe *your* son?

(KUMALO *stands bereft, and looks at the YOUNG WHITE MAN for guidance; but he is walking to and fro a little distance from them, independently. He shrugs his shoulders.*)

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Do what you will!

It is not my work to get lawyers!
My work is to reform, to help, to uplift . . .
It is a wonderful work . . . A noble work . . .
You must not think a parson's work is nobler!
You save souls . . .
But *I* save souls also!

You see people come into the world—
And you see them go out.
And so do I . . .

I saw this Absalom born into a new world;
And now I shall see him *go out*.
We shall see him go out!

(*He stands staring fiercely, then strides swiftly to the door. At the last moment he stops to turn his glare on JOHN.*)

You are a clever man.

But *thank God* you are not *my* brother!

(He goes out. KUMALO looks towards his brother, but he, without returning the look, walks out after the YOUNG WHITE MAN. KUMALO sinks to his knees, slumped with his head and arms on a stool.)

KUMALO: *Tixo, Tixo . . . forsake me not . . .*

Forsake me not . . .

(FATHER VINCENT enters quietly. He goes up to KUMALO and lays a hand on his shoulder.)

What breaks in a man when he can bring himself to kill another?

To shoot the gun that drives death
Into the beating heart?

(FATHER VINCENT helps KUMALO to his feet. The scene begins to fade.)

There was nothing . . . nothing in all the years at Ndotsheni,
Nothing in all the years of his boyhood,
That could make it possible for him
To do so terrible a deed . . .

I asked him, Why did you do it?

(The lights brighten to reveal ABSALOM in the prison, being interrogated by KUMALO and the YOUNG WHITE MAN. A WHITE WARDER stands guard nearby.)

Why did you do this thing, my child?

(ABSALOM shakes his head and makes no answer.)

Answer me!

ABSALOM *(eventually)*: I do not know.

KUMALO: Why did you carry a revolver?

ABSALOM *(defensively)*: For safety. . . .

A man never knows when he will be attacked.

KUMALO: But why take it to *this* house?

ABSALOM *(after a silence)*: I do not know.

KUMALO: They have no doubt it was you?

ABSALOM: I told them. I said I was frightened

When the white man came, so I shot him.

But I did not mean to kill him.

KUMALO: And the others?

ABSALOM: Yes, I told them.

They came with me, but it was I

Who shot the white man.

(KUMALO turns away in despair.)

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Well, Absalom? Why did you leave the work

I got for you?

(ABSALOM looks at the ground.)

Why did you leave it, Absalom?

(ABSALOM remains silent, and shakes his head. The YOUNG WHITE MAN frowns fiercely.)

(Suddenly): And your girl. The one we let you go to.

The girl you worried over, so that we took pity on you.

What about her?

(Still ABSALOM is silent. Then he begins to weep, and sinks down on to a stool, shaking his head. The YOUNG WHITE MAN shrugs his shoulders.)

(Turning away in despair):

So the world goes . . .

KUMALO: Answer me one thing, my child:

You wrote nothing, sent no message.

You went with bad companions.

You stole, and broke in and—

Yes, you did these things.

But why?

ABSALOM (after considering):

Yes, it was bad companions . . .

KUMALO: Bad companions! Bad companions!

I need not tell you that is no answer!

You yourself, what made you yourself do it?

ABSALOM (as though a sudden idea): It was the devil.

KUMALO: Oh, son! can you not say you fought the devil,

Wrestled with the devil,

Struggled with him night and day,

Till the sweat poured from you and no strength was left?

(ABSALOM hides his face in his hands, shaking his head. The scene begins to fade.)

Can you not say that you wept for your sins,

And stood upright, but stumbled and fell again?

(Still ABSALOM does not answer, and sits weeping on the stool.)

Why did you not struggle against him?

(The prison scene disappears and the lights brighten again

on to the Mission House scene, with FATHER VINCENT and KUMALO.)

But again, I do not know, I do not know . . .

(There is a knock at the door. FATHER VINCENT opens the door to the YOUNG WHITE MAN. KUMALO shrinks at the sight of him. The YOUNG WHITE MAN frowns, and hesitates slightly. FATHER VINCENT looks from one to the other and leaves them.)

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Umfundisi.

KUMALO: Sir?

(The YOUNG WHITE MAN looks angrier than ever.)

YOUNG WHITE MAN: I am sorry, umfundisi, that I spoke such angry words.

I have come to speak to you about this matter of a lawyer.

KUMALO *(stubbornly)*: Sir?

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Umfundisi, do you wish me to speak to you?

I know how it is . . .

Will you not sit down?

(KUMALO sits down. The YOUNG WHITE MAN, still frowning angrily, stands while he talks.)

I spoke like that because I was grieved.

And when my work goes wrong, I hurt myself

And I hurt others also.

But then I grow ashamed, and that is why I am here.

Do you understand?

KUMALO: Yes, I understand.

I understand completely.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: I think you must have a lawyer.

Not because the truth must not be told,

But because I do not trust your brother.

You can see what is in his mind.

(FATHER VINCENT returns.)

His plan is to deny that his son and the other boy were with your son.

Absalom said that he fired the revolver

Because he was afraid,

With no intention of killing the white man.

That is his defence. But it needs a lawyer

To make the court believe that it is true.

KUMALO: Yes, I see that.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: Do you know of any lawyer, of your Church maybe?

KUMALO: No, sir, I do not. But it was my plan
To ask Father Vincent . . .

FATHER VINCENT: Yes,
I think I could get a good man to take the case—
A white man who is one of the greatest friends of your people.

I think we are all agreed
That it is to be the truth
And nothing but the truth. And indeed,
The man I have in mind would not otherwise
Take the case.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: And what about the marriage?
He still wishes to marry the girl.

FATHER VINCENT: Then if it can be arranged, I will gladly
marry them.

(KUMALO and the YOUNG WHITE MAN prepare to leave.)

(To KUMALO): Be of good courage.

Whatever happens, your son will be severely punished,
But if his defense is accepted,

It will not be the extreme punishment.

(KUMALO shows no response.)

Stay here and speak with me.

YOUNG WHITE MAN: And I must go. But, umfundisi,
I am ready to help if my help is needed.
(He goes out.)

KUMALO: This has been a sorrowful journey.

FATHER VINCENT: I understand that, my friend.

KUMALO: I was anxious at first.

But as the search went on,
So did my anxiety turn to fear,
And this fear grew deeper step by step—
Msimangu said to me, Why fear this one thing
In a city where there are thousands?
That comforted me . . .

Yet it did not comfort me.

And even now I can hardly believe

That this thing, which happens one time in a thousand,
Has happened to me. ,

Why, sometimes—for a moment or two—

I can even believe that it has *not* happened,

That I shall wake and *find* it has not happened . . .

To think that my wife and I

Lived out our lives in innocence, there in Ndotsheni,

Not knowing that this thing was coming . . .

If only one could have been told,

This step is taken,

And this step is about to be taken . . .

But we were not told . . .

And yet it was revealed to others

To whom it did not matter.

They said, This is Johannesburg,

This is a boy going wrong,

As other boys have gone wrong here . . .

But to us, for whom it was life and death,

It was not revealed . . .

There is a man

Sleeping in the grass. And over him is gathering

The greatest storm of all his days.

Such lightning and thunder will come there

As have never been seen before, bringing death

And destruction. People hurry home past him,

To places safe from danger.

And whether they do not see him

There in the grass, or whether they fear to halt

Even a moment, they do not wake him,

They let him be . . .

FATHER VINCENT: My friend . . .

Your anxiety turned to fear, and your fear

Turned to sorrow. But sorrow

Is better than fear. For fear impoverishes always,

While sorrow may enrich.

KUMALO (*looking at FATHER VINCENT strangely*):

I do not know

That I am enriched.

FATHER VINCENT: Sorrow

Is better than fear. Fear is a journey,

A terrible journey, but sorrow
Is at least an arriving.

KUMALO: And where have I arrived?

FATHER VINCENT: When the storm threatens, a man is afraid
for his house.

But when the house is destroyed,
There is something to do.
About a storm he can do nothing, but he can
Rebuild a house.

KUMALO: At my age?

Look what has happened to the house that I built
When I was young and strong. What kind of house
Shall I build now?

FATHER VINCENT (*desperately*): No one can comprehend the
ways of God.

KUMALO (*without resentment*): It seems that God has turned
from me.

FATHER VINCENT: It may seem so. But it does not happen,
Never, *never* does it happen.

You cannot doubt that. You are a Christian.
There was a thief upon the cross . . .

KUMALO: My son was not only a thief!
There was a white man—a good man,
Devoted to his wife and children;
And—worst of all—devoted to our people.
And his wife, these children—they are bereaved
Because of my son.

I cannot suppose it to be less
Than the greatest evil I have ever known.

FATHER VINCENT: A man may repent him of any evil.

KUMALO (*bitterly*): He will repent. If I say to him,

Do you repent? he will say,
It is as my father says. If I say to him,
Was this not evil? he will say,
It is evil. But if I speak otherwise,
Putting no words in his mouth;
If I say, What will you do now?—
He will say, I do not know,
Or he will say, *It is as my father says* . . .

He is a stranger! I cannot touch him,
I cannot reach him! I see no shame in him, no pity
For those he has hurt. He weeps
Not for his wickedness, but for his danger.
Can a person *lose*
All sense of evil? A boy
Brought up as *he* was brought up? I see
Only his pity for himself, *he*
Who has made two children fatherless!
I tell you, that whosoever offends
One of these little ones, it were better—

FATHER VINCENT: *Stop!*
You are beside yourself!
Go and pray . . . Go and rest . . .
And do not judge your son too quickly.

KUMALO: I have no hope any more . . .

(*Devoid of expression*):

What did you say I must do?

Yes, pray and rest.

(*He moves to get his hat. FATHER VINCENT catches him by the arm at the mocking words.*)

FATHER VINCENT: Sit down!

Yes: I said *pray and rest*.

Even if it is only words that you pray,

And even if your resting

Is only lying on a bed. And do not pray

For yourself, and do not pray

To understand the ways of God: for they are secret.

Who knows what life is?—

For life is a secret . . .

And when you go on, when it would seem better to die?

That is a secret . . .

Pray for Gertrude, and for her child;

And for the girl that is to be your son's wife,

And for the child that will be your grandchild.

Pray for your wife

And all at Ndotsheni. Pray

For the woman and the children bereaved.

Pray for the soul of him who was killed.

Pray for *all* men,
Those who do justice, and those who would
If they were not afraid.

KUMALO: I hear you. Indeed, I thank you . . .

(FATHER VINCENT helps him to his feet, and gives him his hat.)

FATHER VINCENT: We do what is in us; and why it is in us,
That is also a secret.

It is Christ in us, crying that men
May be succoured and forgiven, even when He
Himself is forsaken . . .
Go and pray . . . Go and rest . . .

SCENE 3

[ACT II

*The garden of a house at Springs, near Johannesburg.
A few weeks later.*

The scene is part of the garden of the home of MARGARET JARVIS's niece. A garden bench stands at an angle near the back (right) of the stage. A sundial stands in the centre. Three steps lead to a side door of the house to the left. A small garden table holds some papers, a pipe and a pouch. JAMES JARVIS is reading.

JARVIS: 'I understand better

Those who have died for their convictions,
And have not thought it wonderful
Or brave or noble to die . . .
They died rather than live, that was all' . . .

(He rises restlessly, and stands deep in thought looking at the sundial.)

That was all? . . .

(KUMALO enters, and seeing JARVIS, draws back startled and takes a step or two backwards. But JARVIS sees him.)

JARVIS: Good morning, umfundisi.

KUMALO (faintly): Umnumzana . . . Sir . . .

(He sits down on a step, as though he were ill.)

JARVIS: Are you ill, umfundisi?

KUMALO: I shall recover, umnumzana.

JARVIS: Do you wish water?

Or are you hungry?

KUMALO: No, umnumzana, I shall recover.

(JARVIS stands watching him. KUMALO makes an effort to rise, using his stick, but the stick slips and clatters to the ground. JARVIS picks it up and restores it to him, but KUMALO puts it down as a hindrance; he puts down his hat also, and tries to lift himself up by pressing his hands on the steps. JARVIS stands helplessly watching. His first effort failing, KUMALO presses his hand again on the steps and lifts himself up. JARVIS stoops and picks up the hat and stick, and hands them to KUMALO.)

I thank you, umnumzana.

JARVIS: What are you seeking, umfundisi?

(KUMALO pulls out a wallet, and the papers fall out because of his shaking hands. He kneels to pick them up, but in his confusion he drops the papers he has picked up and the wallet. JARVIS is torn between compassion and irritation, his fingers twitching.)

KUMALO: I am sorry to detain you, umnumzana.

JARVIS (with control): It is no matter, umfundisi.

(All the papers are collected, and KUMALO holds out a paper to JARVIS.)

JARVIS: This is the place, umfundisi.

KUMALO: I was asked to come here, umnumzana.

There is a man named Sibeko of Ndotsheni . . .

JARVIS: Ndotsheni? I know it.

I come from near there.

KUMALO: And this man had a daughter

Who worked for a white man uSmith in Ixopo . . .

JARVIS: Yes, yes.

KUMALO: And when the daughter of uSmith married,

She came to live here in Springs,

And the daughter of Sibeko came also.

But he has not heard of her for these twelve months,

And I have come to enquire.

JARVIS: I will ask the house-boy.

(He goes inside for a moment.)

He says that when he came, umfundisi,

She had already gone.

The mistress of the house is out.

You may wait for her if you wish . . .

I know you, umfundisi. Sit down.

(KUMALO sits on the step and looks at the ground.)

There is something between you and me,

But I do not know what it is . . .

You are in fear of me, but I do not know what it is.

You need not be in fear of me . . .

KUMALO: It is true, umnumzana.

You do not know what it is.

JARVIS: I do not know. But I desire to know.

KUMALO: I doubt if I could tell it, umnumzana.

JARVIS: You must tell it, umfundisi.

Is it heavy?

KUMALO: It is the heaviest thing of all my years.

JARVIS: Tell me. It will lighten you.

KUMALO: I am afraid, umnumzana.

JARVIS: I see you are afraid, umfundisi. It is that

Which I do not understand. But I tell you,

You need not be afraid.

There will be no anger in me against you.

KUMALO: Then . . . this thing that is the heaviest of all my years . . .

Is the heaviest of all yours also . . .

(JARVIS looks at him, at first bewildered.)

JARVIS: You can mean only one thing . . .

Only one thing . . .

But I still do not understand . . .

KUMALO: It was my son

That killed your son.

(JARVIS leaves him and walks out into the garden. He stands looking out into the distance. KUMALO rises unsteadily, picks up his hat and stick. JARVIS returns slowly.)

JARVIS: I have heard you. I understand

What I did not understand.

There is no anger in me.

KUMALO: Umnumzana . . .

(WOMEN'S voices are heard. JARVIS looks up towards the house.)

JARVIS: The daughter of uSmith is back.

Do you wish to see her?

KUMALO: It was for this that I came, umnumzana.

JARVIS: I understand.

And you were shocked when you saw me.

How did you know me?

KUMALO: I have seen you riding past my church.

And lately, in court . . .

JARVIS: Yes, yes, of course . . .

Tomorrow will be the last time there . . .

Perhaps you saw the boy also, riding past the church,

On a red horse with a white face.

And he carried wooden guns—here, in his belt—

As small boys do.

KUMALO: I remember, umnumzana.

There was a brightness in him.

JARVIS: Yes, yes, there was a brightness in him.

KUMALO: Umnumzana, it is a hard word to say . . .

But my heart holds a deep sorrow for you . . .

JARVIS: Yes, yes . . .

(He goes in and fetches BARBARA SMITH, who looks at KUMALO without expression.)

(Quietly to her):

This old man has come to enquire

About the daughter of a native named Sibeko

Who used to work for you in Ixopo.

BARBARA SMITH *(curtly)*: I had to send her away.

She was good when she started.

But then she went to the bad,

And was sent to jail for a month.

And after that, of course, I could hardly take her back.

JARVIS: You do not know where she is?

BARBARA SMITH: I'm sure I don't know.

(Turning to go into the house):

And I do not care.

(Exit.)

JARVIS: She does not know.

KUMALO: I thank you, umnumzana.

Stay well . . .

(He puts on his hat and walks away.)

JARVIS *(walking out a little way into the garden)*:

Go well, umfundisi . . .

(KUMALO turns, raises his hat, and goes.)

JARVIS (*watching him out of sight*):

Till tomorrow . . .

(The stage darkens. The NARRATORS are in position to the left and right. The light focuses on ABSALOM as he stands in the dock.)

Voice of the JUDGE: This Court finds you guilty, Absalom Kumalo,

Of the murder of Arthur Trevelyan Jarvis

At his residence in Parkwold

On the afternoon of the eighth day of October.

And this Court finds you, Matthew Kumalo and Johannes Pafuri,

Not guilty, and you are accordingly discharged.

(ABSALOM's eyes follow the two figures that move away in the darkness.)

Have you anything to say

Before I pronounce sentence?

ABSALOM: I have only this to say:

That I killed this man,

But I did not mean to kill him,

Only I was afraid.

MAN'S VOICE: Silence in Court!

(The BLACK MAN hides his face in his hands. The WHITE MAN turns; he stands erect, his arms folded.)

Voice of the JUDGE: I sentence you, Absalom Kumalo,

To be returned to custody,

And to be hanged by the neck until you are dead.

And may the Lord have mercy upon your soul.

(There is an outbreak of crying and sobbing; shifting figures are seen in the darkness; a voice cries TIXO, TIXO! The CHOIR take up the cry. As it dies down the figures of KUMALO, THE GIRL and FATHER VINCENT are seen waiting in the prison. ABSALOM is brought in by a WHITE WARDER, who is followed out by FATHER VINCENT. ABSALOM looks from KUMALO to THE GIRL with great hope in his eyes.)

KUMALO (*gently*): My son, we are come for the marriage.

(ABSALOM hangs his head.)

Here is your wife that is to be.

(ABSALOM and THE GIRL greet each other like strangers,

each taking the other's hand lifelessly, and so loosely that they fall apart.)

THE GIRL: Are you in health?

ABSALOM: I am greatly.

Are you in health?

THE GIRL: I am greatly also.

(FATHER VINCENT returns in his vestments and with his book.)

FATHER VINCENT: Shall I begin?

(to ABSALOM):

Wilt thou have this Woman to thy wedded wife,

To live together after God's ordinance

In the holy estate of Matrimony?

Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her,

In sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other,

Keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

ABSALOM: I will.

FATHER VINCENT: Wilt thou have this Man to thy wedded husband,

To live together after God's ordinance

In the holy estate of Matrimony?

Wilt thou obey him, and serve him,

Love, honour, and keep him

In sickness and in health;

And forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him,

So long as ye both shall live?

THE GIRL: I will.

ABSALOM, repeating after FATHER VINCENT: I, Absalom, take thee to my wedded wife,

To have and to hold from this day forward,

For better for worse, for richer for poorer,

In sickness and in health,

To love and to cherish, till death us do part,

According to God's holy ordinance;

And thereto I plight thee my troth.

(During this passage the light focuses on KUMALO as he watches the ceremony, which becomes a confused blur of the marriage vows, chanted by a CHORUS of voices off-stage, and punctuated by them with the words TIXO, TIXO. The voice of FATHER VINCENT breaks through.)

FATHER VINCENT: Those whom God hath joined together
Let no man put asunde;

(KUMALO turns away from them, hiding his face in his hands. He does not see THE GIRL and FATHER VINCENT leave. ABSALOM watches him, at a loss for words.)

ABSALOM (with a desperate effort):

When does my father return to Ndotsheni?

KUMALO: Tomorrow, my son.

ABSALOM: Tomorrow . . . (KUMALO nods.)

You will tell my mother that I remember her.

KUMALO: Yes, my son . . .

ABSALOM: And my father . . .

If the child is a son,

I should like his name to be Peter.

KUMALO: Peter . . .

ABSALOM: Yes, Peter . . .

And if it is a daughter . . .

No . . . I have not thought of any name . . .

KUMALO: This cousin of yours, and this other one,

I find it hard to forgive them.

ABSALOM (*shrugging his shoulders hopelessly*):

They lied, my father.

They were there, even as I said.

KUMALO: But they are not here now.

ABSALOM: They *are* here, my father.

There is another case against them.

KUMALO: I did not mean that, my son.

I mean they are not . . . they are not . . .

ABSALOM: They *are* here, my father, in this very place.

Indeed, it is *I* who must go . . .

(*He falls to the floor, begins to sob, and crouches in the way that some Indians pray.*)

KUMALO: Be of courage, my son.

(ABSALOM *rears up on his haunches, crying and sobbing.*)

ABSALOM: Au! au! I am afraid of the hanging!

I am afraid of the hanging!

(KUMALO *takes his hands, and ABSALOM clings to his father's.*)

KUMALO: Be of courage, my son.

(*The WHITE WARDER appears at the sound of the cries.*)

WHITE WARDER (*not unkindly*): Old man, you must go now.

KUMALO: I am going, sir, I am going.

Stay well, my son.

I shall care for your wife and child.

ABSALOM: Where I am going there is no wife and child.

(KUMALO rises to go. ABSALOM catches him by the knees, breaking into louder crying and sobbing.)

You must not leave me!

You must not leave me!

(The WHITE WARDER reappears.)

WHITE WARDER: Old man, you must go now!

(ABSALOM still holds KUMALO by the knees. The WARDER tries to pull his arms away.)

ABSALOM: No, no!

KUMALO: My son, I must go now!

(A second WHITE WARDER joins the first.)

ABSALOM: No, no, you must not leave me!

(Together the WARDERS pull him away.)

No! . . . No! . . .

• KUMALO: Stay well, my son . . . Stay well . . .

ACT III

PROLOGUE

WHITE MAN: Along the narrow path that leads into the setting sun,

Into the valley of Ndotsheni, the homeward journey ends.

How dry it is here! The oldest men of the tribe

Cannot remember such a time as this,

When the leaves fall from the trees

Till they stand as though it is winter,

And the small tough-footed boys run from shade to shade

Because of the heat of the ground.

The cattle move thin and listless over the red and rootless earth

To pluck the cropped grass from the edge of the dried-up stream.

The women must go to the river for water,

To the river that comes from the place of uJarvis . . .

Sadness and fear and pain,

How they well up in the heart and mind

At the sound of a name.

How is uJarvis? Does one dare ask, is he in health?

He returned only yesterday, it is not known.

But the mother returned some weeks ago,

And they say she is sick and thin.

This thing that has happened,

It is known here . . . It is known . . .

The path levels out,

Running past the huts and the red empty fields.

There is calling here, and in the dusk

One voice calls to another in some far distant place.

If you are a Zulu you can hear what they say,

But if you are not, though you may know the tongue,

It is hard to know what they call.

BLACK MAN: They call that the umfundisi is returned,

They give thanks for the return of the umfundisi,

They come from the huts along the road,

They come running down from the hills in the dark.

The boys are calling and crying,

With the queer tremulous call that is known in this country.
A small boy salutes and cries, *Umfundisi!*
But he waits for no answer, he turns away,
And gives the queer tremulous call,
To no person at all, but to the air;
He turns away and makes the first slow steps of a dance,
For no person at all, but for himself.
(*The voices of men and women are raised in a hymn of
thanksgiving in the distance.*)

WHITE MAN: Now man remembers God in a hymn of thanksgiving,

And prostrates himself before the Everlasting Mercy.
And it echoes in the bare hed hills
And over the bare red fields of the broken tribe.

BLACK MAN: *Tixo*, we give thanks to Thee for Thy unending mercy.

We give thanks to Thee for this safe return.

(*This and the following prayers are punctuated with softly
chanted 'Amen's' from the CHOIR.*)

Tixo, give us rain, we beseech Thee, *To entreat*

That we may plough and sow our seed.

And if there is no rain, protect us from starvation, we pray
Thee . . .

Tixo, let this small child be welcome in Ndotsheni,

Let him grow tall in this valley.

Let this girl be welcome in Ndotsheni,

And deliver her child safely in this place . . .

And *Tixo* . . . the son who must die, all mercy failing . . .

Forgive him his trespasses . . .

WHITE MAN: Call, O small boy,

With the long tremulous cry that echoes over the hills.

Dance, O small boy, with the first slow steps

Of the dance that is for yourself.

Call and dance, Innocence, call and dance.

For this is a prelude, it is only a beginning.

It is life you are going into;

You are not afraid because you do not know . . .

*The Church, Ndotsheni.**A few days later.*

KUMALO enters wearily, and stands, looking towards the altar. Out of the shadows a figure stirs, and KUMALO turns his head to see the BISHOP.

KUMALO: My lord! . . .

BISHOP: Mr. Kumalo . . .

Welcome back to Ndotsheni, my friend.

I speak for myself as well as for your people here.

KUMALO: I thank you, my lord . . .

And I for my part give thanks for this safe return.

It is a wasted land, but it is home.

BISHOP: It is very dry here.

I understand that they pray for rain.

KUMALO: That is so, my lord.

Our mealies are nearly finished,

It is known to Tixo alone what we shall eat.

The cattle are dying; there is no milk.

And even the children are dying now.

BISHOP: It is no great wonder that they do not stay in Ndotsheni.

KUMALO: I have been thinking, my lord,

That we should try to keep some of our people here.

BISHOP: And how would you do that?

KUMALO: By caring for our land before it is too late.

By teaching them in the school how to care for the land.

Then some at least would stay in Ndotsheni.

BISHOP: You know, Mr. Kumalo, they have been teaching these things

For many years in the schools.

KUMALO: That is true, my lord. Yet it is sad

To look upon the place where they are teaching them.

BISHOP: I am afraid the school is a place of little power . . .

Mr. Kumalo, I have been thinking too.

I do not like to worry you after all you have suffered,

But I should like to talk to you.

I speak to you out of my regard for you, my friend.

You must be sure of that.

KUMALO: Yes, my lord . . .

BISHOP: Then I think, Mr. Kumalo.

That you should go away from Ndotsheni.

(KUMALO *gropes for support and sits down.*)

Mr. Kumalo . . .

Mr. Kumalo . . .

KUMALO: Sir . . . My lord . . .

BISHOP: I am sorry to distress you.

But would it not be better if you went away?

KUMALO: It is as you say, my lord.

BISHOP: Mr. Kumalo, is it not true

That the father of the murdered man

Is your neighbour here in Ndotsheni?

Mr. Jarvis?

KUMALO: It is true, my lord.

BISHOP: Then for that reason alone I think you should go.

Do you understand me, Mr. Kumalo?

KUMALO: I understand you, my lord.

BISHOP: I would send you to Pietermaritzburg,

To your old friend, Ntombela.

He can worry about buildings and schools and money,

And you can give your mind to the work of a priest.

KUMALO: I understand you, my lord.

BISHOP: If you stay here, Mr. Kumalo,

There is not only the fact that Mr. Jarvis is your neighbour,

But sooner or later you must rebuild your church,

And that will cost a great deal of money and anxiety.

You can see for yourself in what condition it is.

KUMALO: Yes, my lord.

BISHOP: And I understand you have brought back to live with
you

The wife of your son, and that she is expecting a child.

Is it fair to them to stay here, Mr. Kumalo?

Would it not be better to go to some place

Where these things are not known?

KUMALO: Yes, my lord.

BISHOP: I believe the young man who took your place while
you were away

Could be persuaded to take over your duties.

KUMALO: Yes, my lord.

BISHOP: Then let me know what you decide, Mr. Kumalo,
And I will arrange matters . . .
And now I must go,
For I have a long journey ahead of me . . .
Goodbye, my friend . . .

(The BISHOP goes. KUMALO sits dazed and broken.)

KUMALO: Am I old then, and finished? . . .

Where is the vision that I saw at Ezenzeleni?
Of how a priest could make of his parish
A real place of life for his people?
What of the rebuilding, of the home
I had thought to fashion, here in Ndotsheni,
For Gertrude's son, and for my son's wife,
And my grandchild? . . .

Am I old then, and finished?

Or was my vision a delusion,

And these things beyond all helping? . . .

No power but the power of God

Could bring about such a miracle . . .

(He falls to his knees.)

Oh God, my God, do not Thou forsake me . . .

(He kneels in prayer. Voices of TWO CHILDREN are heard from the entrance.)

FIRST CHILD: Look! it is the umfundisi that is returned! Our umfundisi!

SECOND CHILD: I know it! The umfundisi returned yesterday.

FIRST CHILD: You must not go in!

SECOND CHILD (*importantly*): But I have some letters for the umfundisi.

The headmaster said I must give them to him myself.

(KUMALO rises at the sound of voices. The CHILD enters.)

KUMALO: My child? . . .

Some letters, eh . . .

(Shyly she hands them to him.)

That is good of you . . .

Go well, small one.

(She does not go, but stands there hesitantly, rubbing one bare foot against the other.)

SECOND CHILD: We are glad that the umfundisi is back!

KUMALO: But you have had an umfundisi here.

The young man that the Bishop sent in my place.
SECOND CHILD: We did not understand him.

It is only *our* umfundisi that we understand.

We are glad that he is back.

(KUMALO rests his hand for an instant on her head.)

KUMALO: Go well, my child . . . And as you go.

Be sure to ask the people that you meet

To come to the church, the umfundisi

Wishes to see them here . . .

SECOND CHILD: Yes, umfundisi.

KUMALO: And ask them to tell their neighbours also.

Do you understand?

SECOND CHILD: I understand completely, umfundisi.

KUMALO: Then go well, small one . . .

SECOND CHILD: Stay well, umfundisi.

(The CHILD leaves. KUMALO with trembling hands opens the letter which catches his attention most. He stands reading it, then raises his head and gazes towards the altar.

MRS. KUMALO enters. KUMALO does not turn.)

MRS. KUMALO: A small white boy has come riding into Ndotsheni, Stephen.

He stopped outside the church, and when he saw me
He smiled, and raised his cap and said good morning.

It is very strange that he does not know the custom . . .

(She looks at KUMALO, but he does not respond.)

I said it was a hot day for riding,

Would he like a drink of water?

—I would like a drink of milk, he said,

Ice-cold, from the fridge . . .

I told him there was no fridge in Ndotsheni,

So he said, Just ordinary milk then . . .

And when I told him there was no milk in Ndotsheni, not
even ordinary milk,

He said, I would like water then . . .

And now he asks, why is there no milk in Ndotsheni,

Is it because the people are poor?

And what do the children do?

(KUMALO turns suddenly.)

KUMALO: Tell him they die, some of them

Are dying now.

MRS. KUMALO: It is a hard thing to say to a small boy.

KUMALO: It is the truth. What else can one say?

(She draws back, alarmed at the sight of him.)

Tell him Malusi's child is dead,

Kuluse's child is dying,

And how many more must die, Tixo alone knows . . .

(During his outburst she sees the letter in his hand, and fixes her eyes on it in growing fear.)

MRS. KUMALO: It has come then, Stephen . . . From the lawyer . . .

(The letter is held lifelessly in his hand. He inclines his head. The letter flutters out of his fingers to the floor. Without turning to look at her KUMALO goes out. She picks up the letter and reads it. Fear and emptiness envelop her. She sees and opens a second letter with increasing sorrow.

KUMALO returns, unseeing and shaken.)

KUMALO: A small white boy, on a red horse . . .

As like to another who has ridden here

As any could be . . .

There is a brightness in him . . .

MRS. KUMALO: There is another letter—from our son . . .

(She hands it to him.)

And one from him for our daughter.

I will take it with me . . .

Stephen! . . . Read it, finish it.

Let us go to our work.

(She goes out. Voices are heard outside the church, but KUMALO is lost, looking towards the altar, and he does not hear the CONGREGATION as they enter in ones and twos. There is a silence. The CONGREGATION watch him anxiously.)

THOMAS: You wished to see us, umfundisi?

KUMALO: I wished to see you . . . I wished indeed

To see you always . . . "

(The CONGREGATION stir uneasily, and cast worried glances at each other. KUMALO seems to rally some strength, and he goes towards the pulpit.)

(From the pulpit): My friends,

There are things I must tell you . . .

It is known to you that I have been to Johannesburg . . .

Many of our people go to Johannesburg.
I had a brother, a carpenter, who went to Johannesburg.
I had a sister, who went with her small son
To look for her husband who was recruited for the mines . . .
I had a son . . . My only child . . .
He too went to Johannesburg . . .
And when people go to Johannesburg
They go away and forget their customs,
They live loose and idle lives.
They go to Johannesburg, and there they are lost,
And no one hears of them at all . . .
Therefore I was fortunate, you may say,
That in that great city of so many thousands,
I found my sister and her small son,
I found my brother, and my only child . . .
(*He struggles to go on, but THOMAS interrupts gently.*)

THOMAS: It is known here, umfundisi . . .

KUMALO: Ah . . . it is known then . . .

(*Wearily*): My sister was to come with me . . .

But when I went to fetch her, only the little boy was
there . . .

She was gone . . .

WOMAN: Au! umfundisi . . .

KUMALO: And my son . . .

He is condemned to be hanged . . .

MAN: Au, umfundisi . . .

KUMALO: Today I have learned that there will be no mercy;
That he will die on the fifteenth day of this month . . .

SECOND MAN: It is indeed a sorrow . . .

KUMALO: You may tell your friends.

And they will tell their friends.

For it is not a thing that can be hidden.

THOMAS: We shall tell them, umfundisi.

KUMALO: And you may tell them also that it cannot be God's
will

That one such as I should stay in Ndotsheni.

(*A gasp goes up from the CONGREGATION.*)

CONGREGATION: What do you mean, umfundisi?

KUMALO: With a son who has killed a man?

Who am I to stay here?

THOMAS: I tell you, umfundisi,
 There is not one man or woman here
 That would desire it, not one
 That has not grieved for you,
 That is not satisfied that you are returned.
 Can you not see it? Can it not touch you?
 KUMALO: I have seen it, and it has touched me . . .
 My friends, I could not *desire* to go . . .
 MAN: You cannot leave us, umfundisi,
 Without you we shall be in darkness . . .
 THOMAS: I was in darkness until you came, umfundisi . . .
 KUMALO: You touch me, my friends . . .
 But the Bishop would send you a younger man . . .
 MAN: Such as we had while you were away?
 (*Murmurs of protest rise from the CONGREGATION.*)
 THOMAS: Did not the Bishop come himself to welcome you?
 Did we not see the Bishop leave the church?
 WOMAN: What will the Bishop say?
 (*The church begins to grow dark.*)
 CONGREGATION: Yes, the Bishop—what will *he* say?
 KUMALO (*to himself*): That one of his priests . . .
 (*The church grows still darker. A distant rumble of thunder is heard. One of the CONGREGATION near the entrance looks out at the sky.*)
 MAN: Look! Look at the clouds! The other side of the valley!
 SECOND MAN: Great dark shadows sailing over the red earth . . .
 THIRD MAN: Over the red hills, over the tops . . .
 WOMAN: *Tixo* has heard our cry!
 We shall have rain!
 SECOND WOMAN: We shall have rain, umfundisi!
 CONGREGATION: Rain! Rain!
 KUMALO (*soberly*):
 Then you must get back to your work, my friends,
 Before it comes . . .
 (*The stage grows even darker, and lightning flashes occasionally. The CONGREGATION begin to leave in hurried excitement. Thunder is heard approaching. KUMALO descends from the pulpit.*)

BLACK MAN: There is a man
Sleeping in the grass. And over him is gathering
The greatest storm of all his days.
Such lightning and thunder will come there
As have never been seen before,
Bringing death and destruction.
People hurry home past him, to places safe from danger.
And whether they do not see him there in the grass,
Or whether they fear to halt even a moment . . .
(*The words are lost as the storm breaks overhead. KUMALO
sinks to his knees.*)

KUMALO: Into Thy Hands, O God, I commend Ndotsheni . . .
(*Rain begins to pound on the roof. The scene is in semi-
darkness except for flashes of lightning.*)

JARVIS (off-stage): Umfundisil
(*KUMALO looks around bewildered.*)
(*Entering*): Umfundisi, may I put these things in your
porch
And shelter in your church?

KUMALO (*rising hastily*): Indeed . . . umnumzana . . .
(*JARVIS sits down on one of the benches. KUMALO lights a
lamp. The noise increases as the rain penetrates the roof.
A steady rhythmic plucking of some stringed instrument
depicts the penetrating drops. JARVIS looks up and begins
to move around, feeling with his hand for a dry spot.*)

KUMALO (*shouting across at him in nervous apology*):
The roof leaks!

JARVIS: I have seen it!
(*JARVIS moves again. The rhythm of the penetrating rain
increases in speed and strength, a second stringed instru-
ment joins the first, in a kind of fugue of syncopated pluck-
ing. The thunder and lightning increase. JARVIS continues
to move around, avoiding the rain on the floor now as well
as on the benches.*)

KUMALO: The roof leaks in many places!

JARVIS: I have seen that also!
(*At last JARVIS seems to find a dry place. They sit in silence,
eventually the storm abates, the sound of rain slows down.
A faint light steals in. JARVIS rises and goes to stand near
KUMALO. He looks toward the altar, not at KUMALO.*)

Is there . . . mercy?

(KUMALO takes the letter from his pocket with trembling hands. JARVIS takes it from him, and holds it so that the dull light falls on it. He returns it to KUMALO, still without looking at him.)

When it comes to this fifteenth day,

I shall remember . . .

Stay well, umfundisi . . .

(KUMALO remains seated in silence, the letter in his hand. JARVIS stands a moment to look at the bowed figure, then slowly leaves the church.)

SCENE 2

[ACT III

Outside KUMALO's house.

A week later.

BLACK MAN: Hour upon hour he sits silent in his chair,
Neither seeing sight nor hearing sound,
His face sunken into a mould of suffering.

WHITE MAN: Unseen by him the friend who each evening
Drives up with the milk for the children.
Unheard the rumours of the dam to be built.
Unseen the car that came down slowly
Bringing the white men with the flags and sticks,
And the chief, who came riding with his counsellors;
And after much saluting and pointing of hands,
The planting of the flags and sticks across the bare red
fields . . .

BLACK MAN: Only sometimes—
Most often when he takes the small boy on his knee—
Something comes out of him so that he is changed,
And his smile lifts his face out of the mould of its suffering.
Yet even then, he falls back into silence,
And the child wearies of asking and asking unanswered
And uselessly looking his questions . . .
(The stage brightens. The SMALL BLACK BOY enters rather
disconsolately. He looks up to see the SMALL WHITE BOY.)

BLACK BOY: Is that *your* horse?

WHITE BOY (*proudly*): Yes, that is my horse.

BLACK BOY: I like him—all red, with his white face.

WHITE BOY: Yes, he is a fine horse.

BLACK BOY: It must be hot riding.

WHITE BOY: I don't find it hot.

What is this church called?

BLACK BOY: St. Mark's.

WHITE BOY: St. Mark's? I go to a church school, St. Mark's.

It's the best school in Johannesburg.

We've a chapel there.

BLACK BOY: Is your chapel better than this?

WHITE BOY: Oh, yes!—Well, I mean, yes, it is better.

But it's in the town, you know.

Is that your house?

BLACK BOY: Yes, this is my house.

At least, it is my uncle's house.

This is his church also.

WHITE BOY: I see.

I've never been inside a parson's house—

I mean a native parson's house.

Do you think I could see inside it?

BLACK BOY: Oh, yes. It is a nice house.

WHITE BOY (*going off*): Then wait while I tie up my horse.

(*Off-stage*): What is your uncle called?

I mean, what do I call him?

BLACK BOY: Umfundisi.

WHITE BOY: I see. Imfundisi.

BLACK BOY: No. Umfundisi.

WHITE BOY (*returning*): Umfundisi. What does it mean?

BLACK BOY: It means parson.

WHITE BOY: I see. (*Slowly*): Umfundisi. Umfundisi.

BLACK BOY: Yes, that is right!

TOGETHER: *Umfundisi!*

(*They laugh together, and KUMALO comes out, looking dazed and startled.*)

KUMALO: My child?

WHITE BOY: Good morning, umfundisi. I was just saying,
I've never seen inside a native parson's house.

KUMALO: You are welcome to see inside mine, inkosana.

WHITE BOY (*looking inside*): This is a nice house.

I didn't expect it would be so nice.

KUMALO: Not all our houses are such,

But a priest must keep his house nice.

You have seen some of our other houses, perhaps?

WHITE BOY: Oh, yes, I have. On my grandfather's farm.

They're not so nice as this.

Is that your work there?

KUMALO: Yes, inkosana.

WHITE BOY: It looks like arithmetic.

KUMALO: It *is* arithmetic.

They are the accounts of the church.

WHITE BOY: I didn't know that churches had accounts.

I thought only shops had those.

(KUMALO *laughs*.)

Why are you laughing?

KUMALO: I am just laughing, inkosana.

WHITE BOY: Inkosana? That's little inkosi, isn't it?

KUMALO: It is little inkosi. Little master it means.

WHITE BOY: Yes, I know.

May I sit down, umfundisi?

Is that right?

(*He sits on the bench outside the house.*)

KUMALO (*laughing*): That is right!

How long are you staying here, inkosana?

WHITE BOY: Not very long now, umfundisi.

These are not our real holidays now.

(*He pauses.*)

When my grandfather comes back from Pretoria,

We are going back to Johannesburg.

I want him to come back. I like him.

KUMALO: He went to Pretoria?

WHITE BOY: Yes, umfundisi. He went about the dam.

KUMALO: About the dam? What dam, inkosana?

WHITE BOY (*surprised*): Here. In Ndotsheni.

KUMALO: A dam—in Ndotsheni?

WHITE BOY (*laughing*): Yes, umfundisi.

(*He looks at the SMALL BLACK BOY. They do not take KUMALO's astonishment seriously and laugh. KUMALO sits down on the bench.*)

I came with my grandfather into Ndotsheni, umfundisi,

When he and the chief and the other men,

Planted the sticks in the land . . .

And the chief gave a stick to one of the counsellors,
And the counsellor planted the stick in the ground—
BLACK BOY: And there was a white man with a box on three
legs,

And he said, No, not there, take that stick away!
WHITE BOY: Yes, and the counsellor looked at the chief,
And he said, Not there, not there, take it away!
And the chief got back on his horse and sat there.
He didn't know what to do!

KUMALO: But where is the water to come from inkosana?

WHITE BOY: By a pipe from the river, umfundisi.

That is what my grandfather said.

KUMALO: That must be your grandfather's river?

WHITE BOY (*trying to hide his surprise*):

Yes, umfundisi.

(KUMALO sits in dazed silence, shaking his head. The
WHITE BOY looks around him, then tries to break the
silence.)

Water is amanzi, umfundisi.

(KUMALO *does not seem to hear.*)

Umfundisi . . .

(The two Boys glance at each other.)

Umfundisi . . .

KUMALO (*shaking himself out of his reverie*):

My child? . . .

WHITE BOY (*smiling*): Water is amanzi, umfundisi.

KUMALO: That is right, inkosana.

WHITE BOY: And horse is ihashi.

KUMALO: That is right also.

WHITE BOY: And house is ikaya.

KUMALO: Right also.

WHITE BOY: And boy is umfana.

KUMALO: Right also.

WHITE BOY: And cow is inkomo.

KUMALO (*laughing, and pretending to puff and gasp*):

Wait, wait, I am out of breath!

You will soon talk Zulu, inkosana.

You will be able to speak in the dark,

As people will not know it is not a Zulu.

WHITE BOY (*laughing*): Zulu is easy, umfundisi!

BLACK BOY (*clapping his hands*): Zulu is easy!

WHITE BOY: What's the time?

(*He looks at his watch.*)

Jeepers creepers, it's time I was off!

I'll come and see you again, umfundisi,

And talk more Zulu to you.

KUMALO: You will be welcome, inkosana.

WHITE BOY: Goodbye then, umfundisi.

KUMALO: Goodbye, inkosana. Go well.

WHITE BOY: Stay well, umfundisi.

(*KUMALO goes in.*)

BLACK BOY: Oh! Here is the man with the milk!

Strange, for he never comes so early . . .

(*Enter THOMAS.*)

THOMAS (*gravely*): Inkosana, your grandfather is back.

He asks that you return immediately.

WHITE BOY: My grandfather back already!

BLACK BOY: That means you are going to Johannesburg?

WHITE BOY: Yes, but I shall come back for the holidays . . .

Come and help me up on my horse . . . (*Exeunt.*)

(*KUMALO comes out.*)

KUMALO: My friend?

THOMAS: Umfundisi . . .

The small boy was here?

KUMALO (*smiling*): Indeed he was here. When he goes,

Something bright will go out of Ndotsheni.

(*THOMAS is silent. Suddenly KUMALO grows fearful.*)

There was surely no wrong in it, my friend?

THOMAS: No, umfundisi, there was no wrong in it.

But we have been seeking him.

His grandfather has returned.

And his grandmother, the inkosikazi, is dead.

KUMALO: Au! au! It cannot be!

THOMAS: It is so, umfundisi.

When the sun stood so—

(*he points above his head*)

It was then that she died.

KUMALO: Au! It is a sorrow!

THOMAS: It is a sorrow, umfundisi.

KUMALO: And the umnumzana?

THOMAS: He goes about silent. You know how he is.

But this time the silence is heavier . . .

We were working in the trees when his car came driving up.

And one of the women came running from the house,
Weeping and calling: 'Master, hurry!'

And he sprang out almost before it had stopped . . .

It is said that he went to Pretoria

On the business of the flags and sticks,

Which is surely the business of the dam.

KUMALO: It is true then? There is to be a dam in Ndotsheni?

THOMAS: It is true, umfundisi.

So that the cattle will have water to drink,

And water can be brought to this land and that.

KUMALO: Here in Ndotsheni?

THOMAS: Here in Ndotsheni, umfundisi.

I could not find out anything further,

For when it was known that the mistress was dead,

We finished our work and came away,

But tomorrow I shall try to discover . . .

(Voices are heard singing a hymn, and THOMAS looks out into the distance. The voices grow louder during the following passage.)

From the solitary cypress that grows outside my hut

We have taken a branch and made it into a ring,

And into it we have put the flowers of the veld

To make a wreath for the inkosikazi.

They are bringing it now . . .

Umfundisi, will you write a card for us?

And make the edges black with ink?

KUMALO: I write a card? Who am I

To do such a thing?

THOMAS: You would surely have a message for uJarvis,
umfundisi . . .

KUMALO: Suppose this woman died of a heart that was
broken?

Am I, then, to send such a message?

(A few MEN and WOMEN enter with the wreath.)

MARY: I do not like it, umfundisi.

What is wrong with it?

It does not look like a white person's wreath.

WOMAN: They use white flowers.

THOMAS: Yes, they use white flowers—arum lilies.

I know where there are arum lilies:

They grow in a dell near the railway line,

On the far side of Carisbrooke.

KUMALO: That is far away.

THOMAS: It is not too far to go for such a thing as this.

Can you lend me a lantern, umfundisi?

It will be dark by the time I am there.

KUMALO: Surely, my friend.

I have one in the room in my church.

(Exit.)

WOMAN: And there must be a white ribbon.

SECOND WOMAN: I have one at my house.

I shall go and fetch it.

(She moves to go, but stops at the sound of KUMALO'S voice.)

KUMALO *(off-stage)*: This is from God!

This is from God!

(He returns with the lantern, and stands looking from one to the other.)

THOMAS: What is it, umfundisi?

(MRS. KUMALO enters.)

KUMALO: Can it be that an angel has visited us?

There are more cans of milk in the room in my church

Than I have ever seen in Ndotsheni . . .

THOMAS: That is the milk for the children, umfundisi . . .

KUMALO: Milk . . . for the children? . . .

(He looks to MRS. KUMALO for an explanation.)

MRS. KUMALO: Just ordinary milk, Stephen . . .

THOMAS: I am sorry, umfundisi, that it is in your church,

But I brought it early today as we worked no more.

And the mother said put it in there

Till the evening grows cool.

(KUMALO glances from his WIFE to THOMAS.)

KUMALO: You brought it, my friend?

THOMAS: I bring it each evening, umfundisi, as I come from my work,

And each morning I take the cans back.

This will be done till the grass comes

And we have milk again.

(KUMALO *shakes his head as though it is beyond his understanding.*)

You still have no message for uJarvis, umfundisi?

(KUMALO *flounders, then raises his hands to the sky.*)

KUMALO: Tixo will bless him . . .

Tixo will bless him . . .

(*As the lights fade the CHOIR echo the words TIXO, TIXO, in joy and thanksgiving, but with the darkness their voices drop to a sombre note. They continue into the opening of the next scene.*)

ACT III]

SCENE 3

The same. A week later.

(*The CHOIR reiterate the words Tixo, Tixo, while the BLACK MAN speaks.*)

BLACK MAN (*kneeling*): Tixo, we pray Thee, on this eve of the fifteenth day,

Grant Thy servant strength to watch

Throughout this night; and in the dawn,

Be with him, we beseech Thee . . .

(*As the stage brightens, KUMALO stands looking out over the valley. MRS. KUMALO enters quietly and stands beside him.*)

KUMALO (*without turning to her*):

I am going up into the mountain.

MRS. KUMALO: I understand you.

KUMALO: Would you come with me?

I do not like to leave you alone.

MRS. KUMALO: I cannot come, for the girl is near her time.

But you must certainly go.

I will make you a bottle of tea,

And you must take some heavy maize cakes with you.

(*She turns to go.*)

Will you put out the lamp?

KUMALO: Let it burn a little longer.

MRS. KUMALO (*gently*): Has the church so much money, then?

KUMALO: I shall put it out. Let it burn
For what has happened here, let it be put out
For what has happened otherwise.

(Exeunt. The stage darkens completely. A drum beats softly and steadily from now on.)

BLACK MAN: And if you would go up into the mountain
That stands high above Carisbrooke and the tops,
And higher still above the valley of Ndotsheni,
The mountain called Emoyeni, which means 'In the
Winds',

You must first climb the hill that goes
To the place of the chief, then turn
And walk below the mountain to the east;
And when you reach the end of the level path,
Where it begins to fall to another valley,
You strike upwards into the mountain itself . . .

(KUMALO is dimly revealed as he enters, supporting himself on his stick, and out of breath.)

JARVIS *(out of the darkness)*: It is you, umfundisi?
(KUMALO looks around him startled.)

KUMALO: It is I, umnumzana!
(JARVIS comes forward.)

JARVIS: Then we are well met, umfundisi.
For I was bringing a letter for the people of your church.
(He hands KUMALO a letter.)
The flowers were of great beauty, umfundisi.

KUMALO: I thank you, umnumzana.
We were sure the mother knew of the things you have
done for us,
And did something in it.

JARVIS: You were right:
She had the greatest part in it.
These things we did in memory of our beloved son.
It was one of her last wishes
That a new church should be built at Ndotsheni.
I shall come to discuss it with you.
(KUMALO is unable to speak.)

I think it is time you had a new church, umfundisi?

KUMALO: Indeed . . . indeed, umnumzana . . . What words
are there . . .

JARVIS: I am anxious to do it quickly,
 For I shall be leaving this place.
 (KUMALO stands shocked.)
 (Swiftly): I shall often be here.
 You know I have a work in Ndotsheni . . .
 I am told there is no reason why this valley
 Should not be what it was before.
 But it will not happen quickly, not in a day.

KUMALO: If God wills, before I die,
 For I have lived my life in destruction . . .

JARVIS: I am alone in my house, so I am going to Johannesburg
 To live with my daughter and her children.
 You know the small boy?

KUMALO: Indeed, I know him.

JARVIS: Is he like him?

KUMALO: He is like him . . .
 I have never seen such a child as he is.

JARVIS (eagerly): What do you mean?

KUMALO: There is a brightness in him.

JARVIS: Yes, yes, that is true.
 The other was even so.
 Do you remember?

KUMALO: I remember . . .

JARVIS: Where are you going at this hour, umfundisi?

KUMALO (embarrassed): I am going into the mountain . . .

JARVIS (quickly): I understand you, I understand completely.
 (KUMALO turns away so that JARVIS shall not see his distress.)
 (Stretching his hand over the valley):
 One thing is about to be finished,
 But here is something that is only begun.
 And while I live, it will continue.
 Umfundisi, go well.

KUMALO: Umnumzana, do not go before I have thanked you.
 For the dam, and the milk.
 And now for the church.

JARVIS: I have seen a man who was in darkness
 Till you found him. If that is what you do,
 I give it willingly.

KUMALO (*shaking his head, and as though to himself*):
Truly, of all the white men that I have ever known . . .

JARVIS (*fiercely*): I am no saintly man.

KUMALO: Of that I cannot speak, but God

Put his hands on you.

JARVIS (*quickly*): That may be, that may be.

(*Turning suddenly to KUMALO*):

Go well, umfundisi. Throughout this night, stay well.

(*He goes quickly.*)

KUMALO (*raising his hand as he watches after him*):

Go well . . . Go well . . .

(*The stage is in darkness once more. The CHOIR chant softly the words: Go well, go well. . . . Throughout this night, stay well. . . . The NARRATORS are seen, half turned towards KUMALO, their heads raised slightly as they gaze towards the centre of the darkened stage.*)

BLACK MAN: In an angle of the rock, sheltered from the winds,

The heart goes out to the one who must die,

Who promises now, when there is no more mercy,

To sin no more. The mind harks back

To the torment of useless answers,

It is as my father wishes, it is as my father says.

But what if he *had* spoken otherwise,

As the other two had done?

WHITE MAN: Turn aside from such fruitless remembering,

Set yourself now to the order of vigil.

Turn to the things that call for thanksgiving:

Is there not your wife, and the beloved Msimangu,

And the young white man at the reformatory?

Is there not your friend who was in darkness till you came?

Is there not the small boy with the brightness inside him?

Is there not the grave, silent man at High Place?

(*Turning to the BLACK MAN*):

Might not another man, returning to another valley,

Have found none of the things that ~~he~~ found?

BLACK MAN: Why is there a white man there on the tops,

To do in this valley what no other could do?

And why, of all men, the father of the man

Who has been murdered by his son?

WHITE MAN: The mind cannot contain these things,

They are ~~not~~ for ~~man's~~ knowing.

But here are thanks that a man could render
Till the end of his days.

(The voices of the CHOIR are lifted in thanksgiving. They are sustained for a few moments in an exalted chant, then drop gradually, one by one, to a deep and pulsing note, chanting a refrain to the steady beat of the drum: Africa, the beloved country . . . The BLACK MAN half kneels.)

BLACK MAN: And now for all the people of Africa,

The beloved country:

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika . . .

WHITE MAN: God save Africa . . .

(The refrain gives way to the hymn, God Save Africa, which is sung during the following passages.)

(Looking back into the mountain):

But he will not see that salvation.

It lies afar off, because men are afraid of it.

Because, to tell the truth, they are afraid

Of him, and his wife, and those like Msimangu.

BLACK MAN: But what is evil in their desires,
In their hunger? That men should walk upright

In the land where they were born,

And be free to use the fruits of the earth,

What is there evil in it?

WHITE MAN: Yet men are afraid; with a fear that is deep,

Deep in the heart, a fear so deep

That they hide their kindness

Behind fierce and frowning eyes. They are afraid

Because they are so few. And such fear

Cannot be cast out, but by love.

BLACK MAN: Yet there is a man, who has in him no hate for
any man,

But one great fear in his heart: that one day

When they are turned to loving they will find

We are turned to hating . . .

WHITE MAN: Oh, the grave and sombre words! . . .

God save us from the deep depths of our sins.

God save us from the fear that is afraid of justice.

God save us from the fear that is afraid of men.

BLACK MAN: God save us all . . .

(As the hymn draws to a close the BLACK MAN kneels in prayer. The WHITE MAN stands, his head bowed. The CHOIR chant softly to the beat of the drum, which slows down until almost inaudible, as though all is lulled into a state of slumber.)

KUMALO (*crying loudly out of the darkness*):

My son . . . My son! . . . My son! . . .

(The BLACK MAN rises swiftly to his feet, the WHITE MAN draws himself up. Turning, they look up into the darkness of the mountain. The WHITE MAN looks at his watch.)

WHITE MAN: The sun will rise soon after five,

And it is then it is done, they say . . .

(The BLACK MAN kneels.)

If the boy is asleep, then let him sleep,

It is better . . .

BLACK MAN (*desperately*): But if he is awake—

Then, O Christ of the abundant mercy, be with him . . .

(The drum beats with quiet insistence. The BLACK MAN is still crouched in prayer. A shiver goes through him.)

It is cold . . .

WHITE MAN (*gently*): But not so cold . . .

(The WHITE MAN is fairly calm. Again he looks at his watch, then fixes his eyes on the distance.)

There is a faint change in the east . . .

Watch it, and pray . . .

For it may be that they have wakened the boy,

And called him to make ready . . .

(He walks away restlessly):

They say they can eat what they wish

On a morning like this. . . . Strange

That a man should ask for food at such a time . . .

(He contemplates deeply as he walks):

Does the body hunger,

Driven by some deep, dark power

That does not know it must die? •

BLACK MAN: Is the boy quiet, and does he dress quietly?

And does he think of Ndotsheni now?

Do tears come into his eyes . . .

WHITE MAN: And does he wipe them away, and stand up like a man?

Does he say, I will not eat any food, I will pray?

BLACK MAN: Is Msimangu there with him, or Father Vincent,
Or some other priest whose duty it is,
To comfort and strengthen him,
For he is afraid of the hanging?

WHITE MAN: Does he repent him, or is there only room for his
fear?

BLACK MAN (*loudly*): Is there *nothing* that can be done now?

Is there not an angel that comes there and cries,
This is for God, not for man,
Come, child, come with me?

(*The WHITE MAN returns to watch.*)

WHITE MAN: Look to the east . . . Watch it, and pray . . .
For when the sun comes up over the rim,
It will be done, they say . . .

(*The pace of the drum quickens, then gives way to a soft drum roll. The WHITE MAN stands with his head bowed and his hands clasped before him. The BLACK MAN crouches in prayer, and crouches lower, till most of the body touches the ground. The drum roll increases in volume as the red glow of dawn touches the two figures. The drum ceases abruptly. The WHITE MAN raises his head slowly to the east.*)

The sun tips with light
The mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.
The great valley of the Umzimkulu
Is still in darkness, but the light will come there.
Ndotsheni is still in darkness,
But the light will come there also . . .
For it is the dawn that has come,
As it has come for a thousand centuries,
Never failing . . .

But when *that* dawn will come,
Of our emancipation—from the fear of bondage
And the bondage of fear—
Why, that is a secret.

GLOSSARY

Pronunciations given in this brief list of words frequently used in the play provide a key to the sounds of letter and combinations. The pronunciation of other words may be worked out on this basis. Fuller notes on the pronunciations and meanings of words given here may be found in the glossary of the book *Cry, the Beloved Country*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1950.

Inkosána (Ĭn-kös-än')	Little Chief, or Little Master
Inkósikazi (Ĭn-kös'ĩ-gāz)	Mistress
Ixópo (Ĭck-ō'pō)	A village
Kumalo (Kōō-mā'lō)	
Msimángu (Ŭm-sím-än'gōō)	
Ndořshéni (Ĭn-dōt-shā'nee)	
Nkosi sikelél iAfrika (Ĭn-kös' sĭg-ēl-ēl' eeĀf'ree-ka)	God bless Africa
Tíxo (Tee'kō)	God
Umfúndisi (Ŭm-fōōn'dees)	A title of respect used for a pastor
Umnumzana (Ŭm-nōōm'zān)	Sir
Umzimkúlu (Ŭm-zím-kōō'lōō)	

